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TOPICS AND EVENTS.

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WE are glad to see that the bad example set by the ratepayers in Brixton has not been followed in Whitechapel, where, by a substantial majority, they have determined to rate themselves for the support of a Free Library. The Rev. Samuel Barnett's appeal for contributions to make the building fund up to £4,000, when some gentleman has promised to add another £1,000, ought to be successful. Whitechapel has not at present a good reputation, and to plant in its midst such a useful means of doing good may, as this library may, do much to redeem it from the bad repute which attaches to it. We notice that Mr. Henry Tate has offered £5,000 to Streatham if the inhabitants will adopt the Free Libraries Act. The voting is proceeding as we go to press.

THE Conference held at Inverness last week by "the Highland Host," as the *Free Press* styles it, is a noteworthy sign of the times. The consequences of Dr. Dods' sermon at St. Giles's, Edinburgh, are to be farther reaching than the "moderates" hoped and desired; and his explanations of that sermon have not disarmed his Gaelic foes. Marshalled under the captaincy of the Rev. Murdo Macaskill, the "Host," numbering some 250 ministers and elders, almost wholly from the Highlands, held a secret conclave, the members of which were pledged to withhold reports of its proceedings from the world, except such as received official information. The Gaels were in stern mood, as some valorous references to Wallace and the great chiefs of old abundantly testify; while the exclusion of ladies would seem to indicate either that womenfolk are not to be trusted with secrets, or that the deed that was to be done was too dreadful for their milder eyes to behold.

THE Free Church champions of Orthodoxy are sincere enough, and abide by Paul's ill-considered declaration that if an angel from heaven came and preached another gospel that angel would have to be promptly anathematised. Poor Dr. Dods has stirred the bitter spirit of these defenders of the faith by his declarations of large-hearted Christian sympathy. But Professor Bruce has, if possible, done worse. In the September number of the *Expositor* he said something disrespectful about the "golden pot" and the "budding rod," which the writer to the "Hebrews" says were placed in the ark. Professor Bruce said it did not matter whether the writer were correct or not, and described the articles as relics which would not fetch much if they were sold. This is so shocking to the good men of the Highlands that they denounce him as a worse offender than Dr. Dods himself. They call on the College Committee to inquire, and to "take steps within their competency," so as to allay the fears of the Churches, and they mean to see that matter settled if they can. Shut your books, shut your minds, worthy brothers, and seal them with a great seal of prejudice, ignorance and bigotry; otherwise you can no more keep out the truth about the Bible and the old Jewish legends than you can prevent the dawn of day.

THE St. Paul's Reredos case has advanced another stage, or rather

it has received a temporary check, for we presume that the litigants will not be satisfied until they have obtained the decision of the highest court of law in the kingdom. It affords a curious illustration of the divergence of opinion which exists among those who ought to know. In January, 1888, the Dean and Chapter set up a reredos in St. Paul's Cathedral, having on it a crucifix and an image of the Virgin Mary holding a child in her arms. Some four persons, seeing in this a return to Romanistic superstitions and practices, made a representation to the Bishop of London complaining of the erection of this reredos. The Bishop having received the representation declined to do anything more. Thereupon the objectors applied to a Divisional Court, consisting of the Lord Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Manisty, and Mr. Baron Pollock, for a mandamus to compel the bishop to proceed. Baron Pollock considered that they were not entitled to it, but the other judges took a different view, and directed a mandamus to issue. Against this the bishop appealed, and the Court of Appeal, consisting of the Master of the Rolls and Lords Justices Lindley and Lopes, unanimously allowed the appeal. With the reasons for this we are not concerned; but the case helps to bring into strong relief the divergent elements that are contending together in the Establishment. Can a Church be strong or powerful for good which has these internecine struggles going on? Is this a model of what a Christian Church should be?

THE libel suit between the Rev. Andrew Mearns and Mr. William Carruthers, which was tried on Wednesday last, reflects no lustre on either party. It arose out of the Tooting Congregational Chapel dispute. Mr. Mearns published a pamphlet attacking the Presbyterians who had acquired the chapel; Mr. Carruthers, from the opposite standpoint, criticised this pamphlet in no unmeasured terms, and accused Mr. Mearns of purposed misquotation and perversion of statements. Mr. Mearns consulted a solicitor; Mr. Carruthers suggested arbitration, which was refused. An action was brought, in which each party accused the other of libelling him. The jury has found that Mr. Carruthers has not libelled Mr. Mearns, and that the former has no ground for complaining of the latter; so the result of all this washing of dirty linen has been a victory to neither party, while the public has been edified by the sight of two no doubt estimable men indulging in these mutual and not very creditable re-primations. Where were the friends of both of them, and why did they allow matters to go so far as they did? Controversial pamphleteers must expect hard knocks in return for strong blows, and when they cry out our sympathetic public is apt to say, "Serve you right." Mr. Mearns is the Secretary to the London Congregational Union, and Mr. Carruthers an elder in the Presbyterian Church of England.

Nor long ago an Orthodox paper, published in Boston, addressed a circular letter to a number of representative men and women in the religious world asking them to furnish a brief but adequate answer to the question "What is it to be a Christian?" The shortest and the longest answers come from Unitarians. Dr. Bartol said, "To be a Christian is to live for others," while Mrs. Mary A. Livermore wrote :—

"In late years I have come to place great stress on life and character, as furnishing the best evidence of one's being a Christian. "By their *fruits* ye shall know them." And yet, it seems to me that a belief in the historic Christ, based on the New Testament histories, and illustrated and fortified by the researches of the reliable Biblical scholars of the day, is essential if one would be a well-grounded and intelligent Christian, theoretically. Secondly: To this intellectual conviction must be added a persistent and courageous endeavour to act up to one's highest ideal, and to live a life of love to God and man, in accordance with the teachings of Christ. The life must be dominated by a high purpose.

To think, to feel, to do
Only the holy Right,
To yield no step in the awful race
No blow in the fearful fight."

One cannot be a Christian who does not aim to live among his fellows in love and helpfulness, bearing their burdens and illuminating their darkness. As the law of Christ's life was service to the world, so should it be that of those who call themselves by his name. 'By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.'

OTHER answers came from the Rev. LYMAN ABBOTT, D.D., the editor of *The Christian Union*, who wrote :—

"To be a Christian is, according to the New Testament phraseology, to be a follower of Christ—not to think something about Him, but to appreciate Him, love Him, try to be like Him, and trust in the help which comes through Him for accomplishing the work which He gives His followers to do ;"

The Rev. A. P. PEABODY, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Christian Morals, Harvard University, considers "The Christian is he whose prime aim and ever more successful endeavour is Christlikeness";

CHARLES W. ELIOT, LL.D., President Harvard University, says—"To my thinking he is a Christian who accepts Jesus Christ as the best moral and spiritual guide the world has seen, and tries in his spirit to love and serve God and man ;"

The Rev. EDWARD EVERETT HALE, D.D., aptly says—"I suppose that the answer which your question requires is that which the Saviour gave. He said, when he had occasion to answer it, 'Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is My brother, and sister, and mother.' This answer is as good now as it was then ;"

The Rev. DAVID H. MOORE, D.D., defines it as "Building one's life upon the model—Christ Jesus."

The evangelical writers, as might be expected, laid less stress on right action than on correct belief ; but while all these opinions are very interesting we can scarcely expect them to finally settle the question.

DR. F. C. ABBOT's earnest plea for the scientific method has surely a literary, as well as philosophical, application. On the second Sunday in Advent Canon Liddon discoursed in St. Paul's on "The Trustworthiness of the Scriptures." Curious circumstance ; but with the Bible there at hand, and Bibles for reference all about the building, he did not ransack the Scriptures and prove from themselves their trustworthiness, but, as if the matter had been entirely beyond the reach of first-hand investigation, he founded his argument for the trustworthiness of the Old Testament on a saying of Paul, and on the usage of Christ. He said :—

"For Christians it will be enough to know that our Lord Jesus Christ has set the seal of His infallible sanction on the whole of the *Old* (evidently a printer's error) Testament. He found the Hebrew Canon just as we have it in our land to-day, and He treated it as an authority which was above discussion. Nay, more, He went out of His way to sanction not a few portions of it which our modern scepticism too eagerly rejects. Thus when he would warn His hearers against the danger of spiritual relapse He bade them remember Lot's wife ; when He would point out the danger of worldly engagements and pleasures engrossing their thoughts He reminds them how men ate and drank and married 'until the day that Noah entered the ark' ; when He would put His finger on a fact in past Jewish history which would warrant belief in His own coming resurrection He points to Jonah and his being for three days in the whale's belly," &c.

All these are interesting facts, and upon the question of the treatment of the Hebrew Scriptures by Jesus and the Evangelists they would be entirely in point. They are as much in place as evidence for the trustworthiness of O. T. narratives as the eleventh of Leviticus would be as evidence for the habits of the wild hare, or as the later chapters of Job would for evidence as to the shape of the earth. Dr. Abbot's scientific method is sorely needed at St. Paul's. Part of the sermon was an apology for a "second sense" in scriptural language. An example from St. Paul is quoted : "This Agar is Mount Sinai." And Solomon's song is instanced as showing how what in its literal sense might be valueless for instruction becomes, by means of this second sense, "a repertory of the highest Christian truth." No doubt this second sense reveals many delightful meanings, but we are reminded of Adam Bede's remark that he always found that people who could see ghosts had never an eye for the perpendicular.

CHANNING HOUSE SCHOOL, HIGHGATE, LONDON.—The examiner, E. L. S. Horsburg, Esq., B.A., Oxford, wrote Dec. 16 :—"I have examined Channing House High School for Girls in the subjects in which they have been engaged during the term ; a detailed report accompanies this. Speaking generally, the examination may be taken to show steady progress on the part of the pupils, and interesting and efficient instruction on the part of the teachers. I am chiefly struck by the uniformity of attainment displayed—that is, that though there are several who have done extremely well, there are very few who have done conspicuously badly. A good average characterises the school."

SPECIAL ARTICLES.

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CHRISTMAS: THE WINTER FESTIVAL.

THIS season as a sacred and festive one has been notable among men for more than three thousand years. The ancients reckoned their year in a way different from ours. They reckoned by the phases of the moon. We have the evidence of this in our word month or moonth. The early Romans had 354 days in their year, and to make up the balance they had eleven days of festivity, the twelfth being the New Year's Day. This is the reason why Twelfth Day is kept now, for while generations pass customs remain. We arrange our year differently, having 365 days in it, having a leap year every fourth year, in order that we might fairly keep our time by the sun. The early Christian Church adopted the eleven days' festival, the *Saturnalia*, as it was called, as it did many other customs, and thus it often secured acquiescence where otherwise it would have met opposition. When a new form of faith supplants a more ancient one it can hardly help entering into some compromise in what are considered to be non-essentials ; it may be in the acceptance of certain phrases made sacred by long association with the spiritual life of the people, with tender emotion on special occasions of life or death ; or it may be some custom worn so deeply into the habits of men that to reject them would be to hinder the progress of the higher faith without any principle being concerned. Certainly the new faith will show its wisdom in conciliating the adherents of the old faith by taking unto itself whatever is good or even harmless in it. Many of the heathen festivals were so popular, and so woven into the social life of the people that the Christian Church was in a sense compelled to adopt them as Christian festivals, and so associate them with Christian principles. And the *Saturnalia* was a holiday time in which the rigour of slavery was relaxed, and the bondsman was allowed a short season of liberty. For eleven days he was to a large extent his own master. Thus the idea of it was Christian, because one of liberty, and its teachers could point out the fact, and associate in the minds of the great multitude the truth that Christ was he who freed men from moral slavery, the bondage of sin.

The chief reason why the festival was fixed at this season was that nearly all the heathen nations regarded the winter solstice as the most important part of the year, as the beginning of the renewal of the life and activity of nature after its suspension. They saw the sun, which they worshipped under various names, receding further and further from them, rising later and sinking earlier day by day until the shortest day—our 22nd of December—the days becoming shorter and the nights longer, and then there came a pause in that fearful retreat, and it began again to rise earlier and sink later, and rejoicing in consequence they began to indulge in festivities. This was the case with all ancient heathendom from Italy to China ; they each and all celebrated the rebirth of their solar deity at this season. Our Germanic forefathers had their share in shaping the customs of this season, while Druidism added the making of presents, the burning of the yule log, the mistletoe, and the decking of the sanctuary with evergreens.

There may be those who will be ready to resent the statement that our modern Christmas and its festivities have a heathen origin. Rather ought they to rejoice in the long association of time with the season, its prayers, its praises, its generousities and gladness. It is all the more sacred that it has been associated with the experience of so many generations of men—so much devout feeling, so much sympathy and generosity of the well-to-do with their poorer brethren ; that for so many ages families have deemed it incumbent upon them to gather from far and near and unite in the name of Him who is good to all in love, and thanksgiving, and hearty rejoicings. For such gatherings freshen the affections, deepen and strengthen them, besides helping to associate family life with the sanctities of religion. It is good, too, that the festivities happen at this time of year. "I have often thought that it happens very well that Christmas should fall out in the middle of winter," are words that Addison puts into the mouth of Sir Roger de Coverley. "It is the most dead, uncomfortable time of the year, when the poor would suffer much from poverty and cold if they had not good cheer, warm fires, and Christmas gambols to support them. I love to rejoice their poor hearts at this season, and see the whole village merry in my great hall." These words express the kindly feelings of Christmas-time. For truly it is a joyous time when those who have the means resolve to solace and make glad the hearts of those worse off than themselves. And what a thought it is that three or four thousand years ago this festival was celebrated on the high tablelands of Central Asia by the common ancestors of all modern civilised nations. It enlarges the horizon of the mind, and gives a sense of kinship to our kind few other facts can do. It was then, and has been ever since, the festival of more light ; and when

we associate it with the spiritual as well as the natural are not our rejoicings the more sacred, and are they not felt to be the more human when we call to mind that all through the long generations of the past our forefathers did the same at this season? Surely the Father of Lights has never been without the glad song of praise for His goodness sounding in His ear. If they called upon Him as Mithra, Osiris, Baal, or Zeus, and we as God, surely it has always been the same Great Being to whom men lifted their hearts.

And thus we rejoice with the past in the good of our forefathers as well as in our own special good of to-day. And this seems to us as it should be; for with the exception of the Presbyterians of Scotland and Ireland, all Christendom keeps Christmas as a sacred festival. Christianity being a faith of the spirit and not one of mere form, it can legitimately take to itself whatever is true and good in other forms of faith. As the old pagan faith had been for long centuries the means of at once expressing and cultivating the spiritual life of man, it could not be expedient surely that good material belonging to the temple should be wasted when the building of the church was going on. Any sound stone that would fit into its place was rightly put there to form part of its outer walls at least.

There is no certain historical proof that Christmas was celebrated in the Roman Church until about the middle of the fourth century. Julius the First, at that period Pope, fixed it for the twenty-fifth of December. John, Bishop of Nice, writing towards the close of the ninth century, cites older writings in proof of the statement that the Bishop of Jerusalem, finding it inconvenient to visit the scenes of the nativity, and of the Epiphany, Bethlehem and the Jordan, made representations to the Pope of Rome, on which he fixed the date of December twenty-fifth on which the festival should for the future be kept. Then was shown the innate conservatism of human nature where religious rites are concerned, for on this being made known to the Christians of Constantinople by their bishop, Gregory Nazianzen, "there arose no small murmuring among the citizens, as though he had been dividing the feast, and said:—'Thou art dividing the feast and casting us into idolatry.'" The first clear mention of this date is found in a homily to the people of Antioch, written by Chrysostom about the year 386 A.D., where he says:—"It is not yet the tenth year since this day has been made manifest and plain to us" by instructions from the Pope. We do not know the precise day or year on which Jesus was born, and therefore we cannot celebrate it on the actual date it occurred; but it is not only well but necessary that his birthday should be kept. And well was it that this season, dear to the hearts of men through many generations with a thousand sacred associations should have been fixed upon; and thus the old good and the better new joined together be made one indissolubly and for all time. The learned author of "Time and Faith" says, "If we follow the tradition of Matthew (generally, we think, correctly regarded older than Luke), the nativity took place one or two years before the death of Herod; in which case, as Herod died nineteen years before Tiberius (B.C. 4), Christ must at least have been thirty-four years, perhaps thirty-six years of age, in the time of A.D. 30."

Nevertheless, though we may not be able to fix the exact date, it is well that we should commemorate the birth of the great, the good and wise of our race, who have been the benefactors of the world, and specially those who have been great in goodness and piety. And Jesus was transcendently good and pious; God has not sent us a greater soul; he redeems men from error by his truth, and lifts them into spiritual greatness by rousing their emulation of his character. It was well, too, that a precise date should be fixed, so that all Christians should rejoice together at the same time on account of the same unique blessing. And it was well that a time already dear to the great mass of the people should be chosen, and associating it with the highest faith of man, spiritualise it with a still higher meaning, and so gradually cleanse it from what was gross in it, while retaining whatever was good. We find that the early Christians had some such idea, the eloquent Chrysostom speaking to the heathen in these terms:—"You speak of the birth of the Invincible (Dionysus). Who is this Invincible if not our Lord? You call it the birth of the sun; it is He who is the sun." In effect, then, the early Christians said, your Saturnalia celebrates the golden age that is to come when the slave shall be free and all mankind blessed with true liberty. The birth of Christ introduces the era when liberty, equality, and fraternity begin to prevail. The darkness has already begun to wane, for the sun of righteousness has risen with healing in his wings for the nations. This festival, then, means less night and more day, spiritually; less spite and hate, less lust and greed, less cruelty and injustice, less war and gloom of soul; and more bright temper, more love and purity, more mercy, kindness, brotherhood, and justice, and more of the gentler virtues that add grace to life, and put earth into closer communion with heaven. For a new heaven of progress has been introduced into the world, that in

time shall so leaven the whole that wrong shall cease, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away, for right shall be universally done. God's man has come; we now know what a man should be, and in striving to become like him we shall serve the true ends of life. W. M.

CHRISTMAS: LET US KEEP THE FEAST.

ON Dec. 25, or somewhere near that date, eighteen hundred and eighty-nine years ago, one of those beautiful germs of heavenliness which are ever slumbering undeveloped in the bosom of humanity burst forth into flower. It grew and grew, and for a few years beautified the world with its presence; and, when it passed away, left behind it a spiritual perfume which to this hour pervades the moral atmosphere we breathe. It grew in the bosom of a poor, humble peasant of an obscure village in Galilee, a carpenter's son, whose father and mother everybody knew. That little life, however, though it did not last long, soon became a very large life—a centre from which immense influences were diffused. We cannot be said to possess any correct and reliable biography of this holy-minded man, for all sorts of fancies, hopes, desires, longings, myths, legends, and traditions—rolling stones that falsify the proverb, and gather moss continually—have all been busy clustering around his name and person. Many natural things that he did have been exaggerated into miracles, and many sayings attributed to him which it is not at all likely he ever uttered. After all, however, when criticism has done its useful work of separating from the original plant the weeds and fungi that, in the course of centuries, have grown up around it, there still remains, we think, in the bosom of the man of Nazareth "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever." It came into the world in the winter season, perhaps in the midst of gloom, rain, and storm, unattended with any pomp or circumstance, and with no trumpeting of angels or arch-angels; but if there had been close by at that time an ear sufficiently delicate to catch the tones of that "still small voice" which is ever speaking to humanity, it might, perhaps, have heard a low whisper, saying to the child, "Go, little one, into this coarse and sensual world! Try and make it loving with your love, beautiful with your beauty, and wise with your wisdom. Unravel, if you can, some of its vicious complications and difficulties by means of sweet simplicity." If no one else heard this angel whisper the little child did; for as it grew up it diligently scattered abroad, according to its means and opportunity, all that it knew and felt of love, beauty, wisdom and simplicity. Had humanity only received in the same spirit in which he gave, the world might by this time have been a little better than it is now. Men in general, however, have not been utterly disregarding of this influence. Every Sabbath one may see devout youths and maidens, vigorous manhood and feeble age, carrying their various mental pitchers to the Christian fountain, and carrying away what they suppose to be the "water of life." This is generally mingled with a good deal of worldly impurity; but probably there is always a sufficient impregnation of spirituality to refresh and invigorate weak and weary souls.

The majority of Christians make Christmas as much a holiday-time for gaiety as a holy time for devotion. Perhaps, generally, fun and frolic prevail a little too boisterously over all serious feelings. Nevertheless, there seems in almost all minds something sacred in the memories, the hopes, and the associations of the time. There are a few, even among hard sceptics, regarding Christianity as only one of many old superstitions, who will still admit, as within possibility, that there have been in the past, and may be hereafter, souls richly endowed above the average, who have brought, and may still bring, influences from heaven tending to promote "peace on earth and goodwill amongst men," "glad tidings of great joy"—beams of light much needed to cheer up a desponding world. "How beautiful their feet upon the mountains" to the mental vision of those hopeful, trustful, adoring spirits accustomed to look out afar over the wrecks and ruins of time! Even from a secular and merely humanistic point of view, and without any reference to higher life in higher worlds, the thoughts, affections, and habits of Christmas-time are generally pregnant with something sweet, pathetic, and beautiful. Many a father as he draws nigh to his home in the dusk of the evening and hears music and dancing, and sees the forms of his loved ones moving to and fro in the glow of the firelight, feels the distant music gliding into his heart, and opens his arms in anticipation of the moment when the little ones shall fall upon his neck and kiss him.

A happy Christmas to all my readers! May there be in every home a bright fire, a good dinner and dessert, plenty of light from lamps or tapers, and here and there sprigs of red-berried holly, and cheerful autumn flowers; above all, let there be happy gatherings of old and young, with waves of sympathy flowing all round from soul to soul. Let there be gay music and spirited dancing, with now and then bursts of hearty innocent fun. "Erycina ridens quam Jocus circum-

volat et Cupido ;" and if a little harmless flirtation under the mistletoe bough, between handsome youths and lovely maidens, should happen to come under the observation of us elderly people, let us not be harsh in our judgment, but remember the days when we, too, were romantic and young. Oh, that we could all be young again ; but not as youth now is, young in ignorance, in folly, in animal propensities and selfish passions, but young in hope, in faith, in generous impulse, in energy, love and purity. This, surely, is the true youth to which we must gradually approximate in our passage through future worlds. "In heaven," says Swedenborg in one of his visions, "The Angels are continually advancing to the springtide of their youth, so that the oldest angel appears the youngest."

I wish not only a cheerful Christmas to all my readers, but a happy New Year also. May it help to bring about in each of us some happy change in personal character, and some improvement in the morals, manners, and social condition of humanity all round. May it bring the light of intelligence into minds that are now dark ; warm, generous love into hearts that are now cold and selfish, and purity into natures now brutish and sensual. May it bring comfort to the afflicted and sorrowful ; hope to the despairing, and spiritual strength to the feeble. In this kind of development and change may the New Year help in its degree God's kingdom to come, and His will to be done on earth in some approximation to the way in which it is done in heaven.

E. A.

THE CHILD AND THE ANGEL. FOR CHILDREN OLD AND YOUNG.

"ARE there angels now, mamma ? Oh, I do wish there were ; I am sure if an angel came to me and told me to be good, and told me how naughty I sometimes am, I should try never to be so any more, but . . ." The speaker was a young boy, who had just been led to make these reflections by hearing some children in the street sing, "Hark ! the Herald Angels." Young boys' reflections are of a varied kind, especially if they have lively imaginations, and they generally have. On this occasion this young boy would not have liked anyone to press him to continue his reflections from the "but" where he had stopped. What he was going to say was clear to his own mind, but at the moment in which he was trying to explain why people can't be good he was looking up into his mother's face, and he at once remembered that he seldom resisted the persuasion of his mother's smiles. Only as his memory was short, or as he was fain to believe so in common with many of his age, he only remembered how good his mother was, after he had been naughty ; and he wondered whether an angel would be able to keep him straight and always good, unless the angel was always by his side, and such a circumstance of course could not happen, as the angel would have so many other little boys to attend to. His mother's playful laughing eyes brought that reflection to an end ; but as angels were in his mind he proceeded to wish that they really existed, because they are so beautiful, with their long white robes and soft downy wings, "that sweep through the air without the slightest noise," added his mother, "which even doves' wings cannot do."

The latest angel figure the boy had seen was in church, and his eyes had followed the large strong feathers of the wings till these became smaller and smaller, and at last near the shoulders seemed like snow-flakes, so soft and white they were. He had longed even to pass his hand over the marble ; how much more lovely he felt it would be to be allowed to touch a real angel's wing. And just now he felt that he would rather see than hear the "Herald Angels." So that for a very little boy the question which he had just addressed to his mother was quite allowable, seeing that little children were bidding him and all good people listen to the Herald Angels. And when his mother said that we could always hear the Herald Angels, and that they were always trying to make our lives sweet and melodious, and peaceful and full of good-will, the young boy was not quite satisfied. He said that they sang too low, and seemed to cease all of a sudden when he wanted to do something that he ought not to do ; for he knew what his mother meant, and could not deny that he heard the herald voices bidding him seek the peace and love of his mother by obeying her. She had sometimes spoken to him of the "still small voice" as though it were like an angel, a guardian angel, whispering at his ear ; and he did wish that the beautiful angel would some day, when nobody was by, just come and stand by his side really, and look like the angel he had seen in marble, only living and loving. For then he felt he would be so good and kind to everybody, for it would be so delightful to have really seen an angel. It would make him feel so strong to fight against anything wrong and evil, and so eager to be and to do good. And sometimes, when his thoughts wandered to his schoolroom, he even felt that it would be so good of the angel if it would at times whisper the way to do his hard sums. It had never done that yet, but always seemed making him

feel ashamed when he was giving up working at them ; but it would not help him in the least, while he wanted to feel so proud before his companions that he could do these hard things, and never let them know that it was an angel helping him.

And then suddenly he felt that he himself would always be really very weak if he was only like the mouthpiece of the angel. Oh, no ; he would never be really strong and noble that way ; and his pride would seem very foolish, he thought, when he and the angel were by themselves, and the boys were not present. And then he wondered whether it was the angel who had just whispered that thought into his mind, and had made him feel a little ashamed of even wishing for such a kind of superiority over his fellows, and for such a kind of pride. And so a sudden impulse to do everything nobly seemed to swell up in his heart, and make him feel that if only he could obey that impulse always how really strong and good he should be. He felt that delightful feeling came, in some way, from his guardian angel, who could make him feel so brave, and yet did not need to become visible, or to speak too loudly to him. Meantime, as all these thoughts were passing through his mind with all sorts of images, his mother wondered at the sudden quietness of her boy, and then, though it was Christmas Eve, but because it was later than usual for the boy's bedtime, she suggested that it was time for him to go to bed. The elder boys and girls had gone out to enjoy the frosty night and the singing, and perhaps to join in the singing. But they were to return very soon now ; so the young boy begged to stay just till they came in, as he was very comfortable there on the soft rug before the fire, and was feeling every now and again like a young hero, for he felt that his guardian angel was always really near him. His mother indulged him, but saw that his busy mind and the warm fire were both helping to make him drowsy. It was not long before he fell asleep, and his busy little mind was busier now when asleep than when he was awake.

For there was no mistaking the strange things that were happening all around him. He was no longer dreaming, he thought to himself ; but in glorious reality there was his guardian angel standing by him. He could not make it quite out ; but in spite of the long white wings he was sure the face of the angel was his mother's face, and as it was very sweet, and the eyes so tender and bright with smiles, he felt he might kiss the angel. Then he thought that this movement brought him so near that his hands really touched the wonderful feathers of the long, sweeping wings, and he felt himself partly folded in them where the feathers were softest and warmest, and shining with a whiteness that quite dazzled him. And then the angel suddenly set before his eyes a curious scroll, which he unwound, and there was his name upon it, and for a time he could make nothing of it. But gradually he seemed to see himself over and over again ; all his past life seemed to be passing before his eyes in pictures, right up to the very moment when his mother had wished him to go to bed. He did not like to see the greater number of these pictures. He felt himself blushing with shame and bursting into tears. Then the angel turned a leaf of the scroll, and there again he saw himself, and now growing older, but doing things he felt he could not possibly do. Oh, no ! he could never be so disobedient, he could never be so unkind ; and yet somehow he felt that it was really he. He began to feel very, very unhappy, and was forgetting that the angel was holding him quite close to the enfolding wings. Then that scroll seemed to suddenly vanish—he did not see where it went to—and in its place he saw a smaller scroll. Here, too, his name was written, but in such wonderfully bright letters. He looked a long time at the scroll, and at last, as if his memory were seeking all the times in the past when he had acted really nobly, gradually a series of pictures unfolded themselves before his wondering, tearful eyes. He saw himself again, but not so often this time as in the first scroll. But his tears dried on his cheeks, and he began to feel a little happier ; impulse after impulse to do nobly seemed to shoot through his heart ; he felt himself becoming tightly drawn to the angel's breast ; he seemed to feel such wonderful thrills pass through that snow-white robe and pass into his little heart. He could hardly breathe for joy and delight, and suddenly a leaf was turned, a leaf of the future, and he saw himself—yes, himself—so noble, so brave, so enduring, so patient that all men respected him, and all good men loved him. He looked eagerly into the angel's face, and read the meaning of these two scrolls. Then with a sudden impulse of deep resolve to overcome all difficulties, to bear all pains, he sprang close to the angel, and sealed that resolve with a long, angelic kiss.

At this moment there was a loud burst of Christmas music on the frosty air. The young boy waking found himself in the close embrace of his mother, who had pressed her lips so tenderly to his as she stooped to lift him to take him to his bed. For a moment he thought it was the angel of his dream, and then he remembered that the face of the angel was like his mother's face, and as he put his

arms around her neck he said, half asleep, half awake, "Mamma, dear, there are angels, and one looks just like you; but what the angel showed me made me forget all about its beautiful wings. It was my guardian angel."

As the boy grew up his guardian angel did not write so often in the scroll that had made the boy blush and weep. And when sometimes his mother playfully praised him, for she knew that he needed no praise but her love, he was wont to say that his guardian angel did not now come in dreams, but he felt its strong inspiring embrace grow closer, warmer every day; he heard its heralding voice clearer day by day; but that he could also see that angelic face whenever he looked at his mother; for he remembered the night when the guardian angel first appeared to him in a dream.

E. L. H. THOMAS.

LOUISA M. ALCOTT: A STORY FOR THE DISCOURAGED.

BY THE REV. R. A. ARMSTRONG, B.A.

"THE Life, Letters, and Journals of Louisa May Alcott," who wrote "Little Women" and "Little Men," "An Old-fashioned Girl" and "Jo's Boys," is surely one of the sweetest and wholesomest biographies that ever told the reader the secrets of a loving heart and an unconquerable spirit. It is a book for the discouraged, showing them one who by sheer determination vanquished all discouragement. A book for the depressed, showing them how a brave heart may shake off and rise above depression. A book for the domestic, showing how the Marthas of the world may still cherish the bright affections of the Marys—how the Marys of the world may courageously buckle to at the drudgery of the Marthas. A book for the ambitious, showing how at least in one case in the great world's history the ends of ambition were realised by the pathway of self-abnegation and lifelong service to the beloved.

Many of us know the fresh and healthy breeziness of Miss Alcott's books, her light and playful touch, her tender domestic purity, making her stories a perfectly wholesome and delightful food not for the children only, but for the elders also if they have left in them a touch of the child-like spirit. But till we read her own story we did not know the struggle and pain through which all this had been achieved, the long, patient, loving service to parents and to sisters, the hard, hard, persistent work, the cheerful acceptance of uncongenial duties, the multitudes of whole or partial failures, the noble, steadfast self-discipline in mind and heart. They who have read the story will feel, I think, that Louisa Alcott is even more surely enrolled in the record of those who have lived and died heroically than in the guild of the great writers of the nineteenth century.

And it is always purifying and ennobling to contemplate the lives of such as have lived heroically—most so of all, perhaps, when the heroism has been exhibited not in any brilliant, public field, but in the dull, distasteful task-work of the home and the unnoted struggle with difficulties of circumstance and disposition.

Louisa Alcott came of the finest New England stock—her mother one of the Mays who stood by Garrison all through his heroic warfare, her father a man of pure and elevated feeling, a transcendentalist—in the eyes of many a dreamer a man akin to Emerson in speculation, to our own William Henry Channing in temperament.

And Louisa entered a home that was very narrow, when fifty-seven years ago this month she first opened her baby eyes upon the world. Poverty pressed hard upon the frugal household, and from earliest childhood she was well accustomed to the shifts and contrivances which poverty entails. And the colour is given to her life and character by the struggle all through childhood and youth between the duty of perpetual domestic tasks, and the longing—stimulated by the inarticulate genius within her—to write and write and write the thoughts and fancies that forever wove themselves in her eager brain. To sweep a room when your whole soul is longing for intellectual activity, to stand at the wash-tub when the figures of your fancy are running riot in your brain and clamouring to be expressed, and that, too, week after week and year after year, through all the precious seed-time of the intellectual life—and to do it, moreover, with a smile in the eyes and a playful word upon the lips—this is heroism of the noblest kind, though none note the struggle but a tender mother, and the touch of her gentle kiss be all the praise.

And yet even then Louisa found time to express the struggle, and so to relieve the strain in verse that was full of her own concentrated energy and sweet spirit of service. To me, at any rate, this very domestic little poem, written by Louisa Alcott when only fifteen years of age, seems to have in it a vast deal more true poetry than many a much more famous lyric, and a great deal more real religion than any sermon which is not written out of the inward experiences of life.

She calls it "A Song from the Suds," and this is how the fifteen-year old maiden sings:—

Queen of my tub I merrily sing,
While the white foam rises high,
And sturdily wash, and rinse, and wring,
And fasten the clothes to dry;
Then out in the free fresh air they swing,
Under the sunny sky.
I wish we could wash from our hearts and our souls
The stains of the week away,
And let water and air by their magic make
Ourselves as pure as they;
Then on the earth there would be, indeed,
A glorious washing-day!
Along the path of a useful life
Will heart's-ease ever bloom;
The busy mind has no time to think
Of sorrow, or care, or gloom;
And anxious thoughts may be swept away
As we busily wield a broom.
I am glad a task to me is given
To labour at day by day;
For it brings me health, and strength, and hope,
And I cheerfully learn to say—
"Head, you may think; heart, you may feel;
But, hand, you shall work away!"

She was only twelve years old when she wrote a little poem on Despondency, which shows that even in childhood the cheery courage came not by temperament altogether, but through a truly religious conflict with the spirit of depression. "Silent and sad," wrote the little girl:—

Silent and sad,
When all are glad,
And the earth is dressed in flowers;
When the gay birds sing
Till the forests ring,
As they rest in woodland bowers.
Oh, why these fears,
And these idle fears
For what may come to-morrow?
The birds find food
From God so good,
And the flowers know no sorrow.
If He clothes these
And the leafy trees,
Will He not cherish thee?
Why doubt his care?
It is everywhere,
Though the way we may not see.
Men, why be sad
When all are glad,
And the world is full of flowers?
With the gay birds sing,
Make life all spring,
And smile through the darkest hours.

In form a poor jingle, perhaps, with very hackneyed rhymes; but the spirit of it, what a fragrant exhalation from the little maiden's battle and struggle with the realities of a life of which even she had tasted the hardships and the sorrows!

It was about the same time that the child entered this in the simple little journal which the innate literary instinct made her keep:—

"I had an early run in the woods, before the dew was off the grass. The moss was like velvet; and as I ran under the arches of yellow and red leaves I sang for joy, my heart was so bright and the world so beautiful. I stopped at the end of the walk, and saw the sunshine out over the wide 'Virginia meadows.'

"It seemed like going through a dark life or grave into heaven beyond. A very strange and solemn feeling came over me as I stood there, with no sound but the rustle of the pines, no one near me, and the sun so glorious, as for me alone. It seemed as if I felt God as I never did before, and I prayed in my heart that I might keep that happy sense of nearness all my life."

And forty years afterwards the woman whose books were now read by the children of every quarter of the world annotated this passage from her childish journal:—"I have, for I most sincerely think that the little girl 'got religion' that day in the wood when dear mother Nature led her to God."

Not many damsels of twelve years old make such entries in their diaries. Yet this was a damsel who ran and romped with the best, who would go wild with delight flying a kite, and loved to play ball with the boys when she got the chance.

But the lesson of the book is in the steady, unflinching hard work of the girl and the woman; work in which the great aim of writing good books which should be widely read was never for a moment put out of sight through all the years, but for a long time much more work of the hand than of the head; work of which the inspiration

always was the longing to help and comfort those she loved, and above all to make a home for the dear, care-worn mother, that in her old age all her loving kindness should be returned sevenfold into her bosom. And at last, when health was broken, and heart and head were already not a little weary, came success and fame, and such modest fortune as the world thinks it worth while to accord to those who spend strength and genius with unflagging courage to gladden it with sweet and gentle books, and teach it to love the things that are pure and honest and of good report.

An entry here and there in the journal gives us a peep at the girl and then the woman fighting the battle of her life.

Sometimes despondency will have its sway for a little while. She is seventeen when the entry is, "Every day is a battle, and I'm so tired I don't want to live; only it's cowardly to die till you've done something."

And then she breaks into the simple verse which is her solace:—

On, when the heart is full of fears
And the way seems dim to Heaven,
When the sorrow and the care of years
Peace from the heart has driven—
Then, through the mist of falling tears,
Look up and be forgiven.
Forgiven for the lack of faith
That made all dark to thee,
Let conscience o'er the wayward soul
Have fullest mastery:
Hope on, fight on, and thou shalt win
A noble victory.

A few weeks afterwards:—

"I often think what a hard life mother has had since she married—so full of wandering and all sorts of worry! . . . I think she is a very brave, good woman; and my dream is to have a lovely, quiet home for her, with no debts or troubles to burden her. But I'm afraid she will be in heaven before I can do it. . . . Waiting is so hard!"

Two or three years later:—

"In January I started a little school . . . about a dozen in our parlour. In May, when my school closed, I went to L.—as second girl (that is as a domestic servant). I needed the change, could do the wash, and was glad to earn my two dollars a week. Home in October with thirty-four dollars for my wages."

And then presently again, in a letter to her sister:—

"I am grubbing away as usual, trying to get money enough to buy mother a nice warm shawl. I have eleven dollars, all my own earnings—five for a story and four for a pile of sewing."

"In 1855, when she is twenty-two years old, the earnings have begun to creep up a little:—

"Began another tale, but found little time to work on it, with school, sewing, and house-work. My winter's earnings are:—School, one quarter, fifty dollars; sewing, fifty dollars; stories, twenty dollars—if I am ever paid."

And one year later still:—

"Got five dollars for a tale and twelve dollars for sewing; sent home a Christmas box to cheer the dear souls in the snowbanks."

And so the brave, hard life went on till the great war broke out between North and South. Then Louisa went off to nurse the wounded, and shattered her health for life in a few strenuous and awful weeks. But the "Hospital Sketches" she sent home took the folk of the North by storm, and gave her at last the name and fame which were the one thing needed to secure her readers for whatever she should write in future. Then came "Little Women" and empire over the hearts of the children of America and Europe.

The life of Louisa Alcott is rich in lessons for all who find life hard and success long deferred—rich not so much by the success which came at last, and which perhaps to some of us may never come at all, but rich rather by the beautiful picture it presents of patient and cheerful toil both at the beloved story-writing and at labours wholly uncongenial, and by the deep, religious, self-chastening spirit which alone enabled this toiling woman to keep love in her heart and brightness on her face, and at last to pour forth the flood of her sweet sympathy and affection to the girls and boys of two great continents. Few indeed may hope ever to attain such conquest in the outward career as she attained; but everyone of us, if we take to ourselves the patience and the courage and the self-denial in which she lived, may conquer in the inward strife, and present at last to God the offering of a life pure and sweet and strong amid all discouragement, steadfast in hope, and faithful in daily service.

Let us conclude our tribute to the beautiful memory of Louisa Alcott by citing the tender prayer she wrote some eighteen months before at last the worn and weary body faded away in death.

Courage and patience, these I ask
Dear Lord, in this my latest strait;
For hard I find my ten years' task,
Learning to suffer and to wait.

Life seems so rich and grand a thing,
So full of work for heart and brain,
It is a cross that I can bring
No help, no offering, but pain.
The hard-earned harvest of these years
I long to generously share;
The lessons learned with bitter tears
To teach again with tender care.
To smooth the rough and thorny way
Where other feet begin to tread,
To feed some hungry soul each day
With sympathy's sustaining bread.

But if I may not, I will ask
Courage and patience for my fate,
And learn, dear Lord, thy latest task—
To suffer patiently and wait.

SHORT NOTICES.

Picture lovers will welcome *Century* and *Harper's*, *St. Nicholas* and *The Magazine of Art*, which we name in a crescendo of delight. The charm of the children's pages in the third-ranked will be furtively enjoyed by the old stager who takes up the magazine ostensibly to read Mrs. Ritchie's sketch of the boyhood of her father. Thackeray, it appears, achieved the distinction of being carved in bust at the early age of eleven. Many of his drawings and letters are given in facsimile. The *Magazine of Art* is very rich in pictures, those of "The Adoration" and "The Nativity" being especially interesting. It has also a fine engraving of Sir Joshua Reynolds' beautiful picture, "Hope Nursing Love," exhibited at the Academy 120 years ago.

The Universal Review appears to grow more sumptuous every month, and it is now much less questionable as to its pictures than in one or two former issues. The reproductions of Italian art are perfect gems, and some of the woodcuts are finely conceived. The most interesting contribution this month is Mr. Pollard's "Old Christmas Plays," the most valuable Professor Skeat's scholarly edition of the Dyer's Tale from Chaucer. Professor Verrall seeks to redeem Propertius from a charge which Latinists will understand without further reference. We should be happy if his attempt proved ultimately successful.

The very thoughtful analysis in *The Westminster Review* of M. Schuré's work on the esoteric doctrines of the "Great Initiates," given by our valued contributor the Rev. Walter Lloyd, deserves the careful attention of those who, like ourselves, have little time to bestow on the vague and bizarre utterances which are occasionally made by exponents of theosophy. The last paragraphs are especially noteworthy, as expressing the convictions of one who has evidently given much patient study to an unsatisfactory theme. Mr. Lloyd says:—

"If religion is to be reconciled with science it will have to be on more rational grounds than those supplied by occult philosophy. There is too much mystery about it to commend it to popular acceptance. In M. Schuré's story of the Initiates there is a prevailing semi-darkness, the thunder is always rolling, lightning always flashing; revelations are made to seers under the starry skies, in solemn forests, in crypts lit by mysterious lamps—never in the open day. . . . A religion that can be reconciled with science will have to be one which will bear the full light of day, which can be apprehended by all men, and not a secret consolation, intelligible only to the initiated few."

The *Unitarian Pocket Almanac* has been issued, with almost startling effect, in good time this year; and but for the illness of the Rev. W. C. Bowie, who had the editing of the book entrusted to him by the Executive Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, its appearance would have been earlier still. Both Mr. Bowie and Mr. Charlesworth, who took the work in hand under some difficulty, may be congratulated on the issue of a business-like publication. Some trifling blemishes which are visible are no doubt due to the hurried circumstances attending its "final redaction;" but they are outweighed in importance by evident improvements. The Churches are grouped according to country, and careful classification has been attempted in the accounts of the Educational, Missionary and other agencies, as well as in the lists of Conference Funds, &c. Some abbreviation is observable in the miscellaneous contents of the *Almanac*, the forthcoming *Year Book* being intended to convey information of an ampler character. To those who want a useful and handy little diary, as well as concise lists of our ministers and congregations, the *Almanac* may be honestly commended. (Essex Hall. Gilt edged, with tuck. 1s.)

A very suitable present for Christmas is the *Humorous Songs and Comic Recitations for the Young Ones* of Miss Jennett Humphreys. The genial, kind-hearted sympathy which the authoress shows with children of every age is well-known among us, and here we find her indulging in every variety of frolic and mirth for the

benefit of her many infant friends. The songs are set to music (which is printed in both notations), and many of them are made to serve as time and tune to original movements and games. As to the method of using the book, Miss Humphreys gives excellent advice when she says, "if you are leading off one of the most babyish of the proposed games or utterances, become a baby; see life as babies see it; being quite sure of the sweetness of sweets; of the lovingness of love; of the absorbing (momentary) interest of a crop of fun." It may be difficult for some of us to follow such advice, but then all are not competent to teach babies. The book is not sufficiently attractive in appearance. Infants' books should teem with illustrations, yet here is not one; they should be printed with some attempt at symmetry, but this is the most irregularly printed volume we have seen for a long time—the printer appears to have had the movement of some of the dances in his head when he planned the pages. It is a book filled with nonsense of the most original kind, but it looks as formidable and forbidding as a technical manual. If it were decently printed and attractively illustrated and bound, and sold for a shilling, it ought to find its way into every nursery. (George Gill and Sons. 2s. 6d.)

Laugh and Learn, by the same authoress, amply justifies its title, for it is one of the best nursery books we have seen. Miss Humphreys is here in her happiest vein, and has apparently spared no pains to make the book really useful alike to teacher and taught. Opening with some excellent lessons on the alphabet, it goes on through "tiny readings, short tales, rhymes and jingles, &c.," to various kindergarten games, and includes such diverse subjects as acting charades, indoor gardening, and how to make handkerchief rabbits. We cannot quite agree with Miss Humphreys's remarks in her preface about the unwisdom of trying to overcome the difficulties of our English language, nor should we care for our youngsters to make painting brushes as recommended by her on page 207; but with these two exceptions we have nothing but praise for her book. It is well written, well printed, and well bound, and will form a most valuable addition to our limited stock of first-class nursery literature. (Blackie and Son. 3s. 6d.)

PAMPHLETS, SERMONS, &c.—Out of a pile of these publications to hand the following call for special notice:—Dr. Drummond's *Address and Sermon*, delivered in connection with the opening of Manchester New College at Oxford, which are utterances alike worthy of the author and the occasion. The sermon in particular is very finely conceived and expressed, and is a characteristically sympathetic statement of Unitarian thought respecting the "Christian Revelation of God." We trust it will not only be bought but read.—(Williams and Norgate. Price 6d. each.) John Page Hopps's *Sermons for our Day* reach the close of the fourth volume, and of the entire series in the December issue, which contains a number of sermonettes on "Christmas, Little by Little, Habits," &c., and in his *Little Wicket Gate to Life* several of these reappear along with others of a like simple and direct character. The book just-named may be remembered by those wise old friends who like their child-friends to have a flavour of kindly yet serious counsel in their Christmas presents.—(Williams and Norgate. 1s.) Professor Henry Drummond's address on "The Greatest Thing in the World" (viz., Love) has been reprinted and issued in elegant binding for presentation purposes. It is an interesting exposition of the 13th Chapter of Corinthians.—(Hodder and Stoughton. 1s.) *The Worship of the Unknowable*, by Dr. R. Bithell, illustrates very vividly how the religious temperament survives when theological definitions fade away. Dr. Bithell is an agnostic, but his agnosticism, while it admits that the Unknowable may never be the object of cognition, still regards it as the object of belief, of faith, and of emotion, and in the emotional exercises, which he values, are those of reverence, worship, and aspiration. We find ourselves in almost complete accord with the sentiments of this most thoughtful discourse.—(Watts. 2d.) *The Immortal Bible*, by F. J. Gould, is also typical of the more sympathetic order of freethinking. It gives in brief compass (perhaps a little too confidently) many of the verdicts of criticism on the Bible writings.—(Watts. 1d.) Dr. Park's *Essay On Faith as an Intellectual Function* is said to be a first contribution to a "Religion of Euclid." It was written ten years ago, and though a supplementary note is designed to bring it up to date, we cannot find much promise in this latest attempt to make "a" religion.—(Watts. 6d.) *Does Prohibition Prohibit?* is the title of a pamphlet by H. J. Osborn, of the United Kingdom Alliance, in which he says that when prohibitory laws are rightfully administered they accomplish all that can be expected of them; they reduce drinking to a minimum, as he proves from personal observation in the various States of America. The pamphlet is very valuable to the temperance advocate.—(Alliance News Office. 1d.) *Working Men and Free Public Libraries* is a short appeal to the former to wisely use the latter. The author, S. Hales, who is librarian at Toynbee Library, writes sensibly and clearly, and we

hope working men will read his little pamphlet.—(Reeves. 1d.) *Criticism* is the title of a pamphlet, issued by the Hull Literary Club, and containing the Presidential address delivered this season by the Rev. H. Woods Perris. It is redundant of keen thoughts and happy expressions, the fruit from an intimate acquaintance with the best forms of English literature. The club did well to preserve an utterance so pregnant. (Brown, Hull, 1s.) Lord Queensbury is famous for having been penalised by his brother Scottish Peers on account of what they deemed his Atheism. He has just published an essay and a poem (*The Spirit of the Matterhorn*, Watts, 1s.), in which he denies the charge brought against him, and unfolds his creed which sums up into the words, "man should do good for the sake of God." He understands the soul as a manifestation of power contingent on the form of the body, and is, of course, profoundly Agnostic as to the nature of the great Power of the Universe. *English, Literary and Vernacular*, by the Rev. S. Fletcher Williams, is a Paper read by the author before the Literary and Philosophical Institute of Liverpool. It contains copious illustrations of the living and accretive power of English, these being taken from early and later sources down to our own time; and concludes with a plea on behalf of a simpler vocabulary in school books and similar publications. *The Old and New Science* is an essay by Mr. Hugh James, one of the Library Commissioners for Battersea. Originally written for a shorthand society, it was recast with additions, and published on behalf of the Battersea Polytechnic. It deals chiefly with the new astronomy, and very suggestively introduces the leading conclusions of modern physicists concerning the origin, structure and destiny of the stellar Universe. (Of the author, 6, Gorst-road, Wandsworth Common, S.W. Price 1s.) *A Reply to the Rev. John Hanson's Attack on Unitarians*, by Robert Hainsworth, is a pamphlet dealing with a newspaper controversy, now many months old, which raged at Leeds, concerning the Rev. Chas. Hargrove, and Unitarians in general. We have only one side of the debate before us, and cannot give any opinion as to its merits; judging from the pamphlet before us, it must have been almost too "lively" to be edifying to one side or to the other. As representing one aspect of the battle of our day it is decidedly interesting. (Of the author, Leeds.) We have also received *In the Queen's Name: a breach of faith*, a plea by Mr. W. Digby on behalf of Hindoos alleged to have been shabbily treated (Bonner); *Imperial Federation*, by D. M. Morrison (Thacker). *On Arbitration*, by Max, Prashkauer, F.S.S. *The Old Evangelicalism and the New*.—A very noteworthy sermon, by Dr. R. W. Dale, of Birmingham. (Hodder and Stoughton. 1s.)

OLD AND NEW.

(From the Dutch of DE GENESTET.)

"There's much that's new and much that's true
In the teaching of these Germans;
Why don't I accept it then, say you?
—It would ruin my old sermons."

W. E. M.

SEVERAL letters are unavoidably postponed.

GIFT TO BEDFORD COLLEGE, LONDON.—The building of the new wing to this College (in York-place, Baker-street, W.) has been making very satisfactory progress during the autumn, and the façade to East-street is now free from scaffolding, and bears the inscription "Bedford College, Shaen Wing. Erected 1889." The fund already collected from friends of the College—viz., £3,760—will almost suffice to complete the building, but the fittings and apparatus for the two new laboratories for physics and chemistry still remain to be provided for. To make these as complete as is desired, so that the laboratories, when finished, may be the best for the use of women students in London, a further sum of between £2,000 and £3,000 is required. At the meeting of the members of the College, which has just taken place on hearing the report of the Council, and seeing the satisfactory progress made with the new wing, Mr. Henry Tate generously promised a second donation of £1,000 towards the above sum, on condition that another £1,000 was collected as soon as possible, so that the whole building may be fully equipped, and ready for occupation at Easter. The newly-arranged laboratory for botany and biology will be ready about the same time. It is hoped that all who are interested in women's higher education, and, at the same time, are anxious to make the memorial to Mr. Shaen as worthy as possible, will help in the laudable endeavour to make these laboratories for women first-rate. Contributions may be sent to the Treasurer of the Building Fund, Miss B. Shadwell, 8 and 9, York-place, W.; or to Miss H. Busk, 1, Gordon-square, W.C.

EPPE'S COCOA.—GRATEFUL AND COMFORTING.—"By a thorough knowledge of the natural laws which govern the operations of digestion and nutrition, and by a careful application of the fine properties of well-selected Cocoa, Mr. Epps has provided our breakfast tables with a delicately flavoured beverage which may save us many heavy doctors' bills. It is by the judicious use of such articles of diet that a constitution may be gradually built up until strong enough to resist every tendency to disease. Hundreds of subtle maladies are floating around us ready to attack wherever there is a weak point. We may escape many a fatal shaft by keeping ourselves well fortified with pure blood and a properly nourished frame." *Civil Service Gazette*.—Made simply with boiling water or milk. Sold only in packets by Grocers, labelled—"JAMES EPPE and Co., Homoeopathic Chemists, London."—Also makers of Epps's Afternoon Chocolate Essence.

The Inquirer.

A Religious Political, and Literary Newspaper and Record of Reverent Free Thought.

ESTABLISHED 1842.

LONDON, DECEMBER 1, 1889.

ROBERT BROWNING.

ROBERT BROWNING has passed away! In the phrase of the only other English poet of our day whose work seems destined to fill an equal place with his in the history of literature, he has "crost the bar;" and with a somewhat cheerier faith than TENNYSON's he has gone, hoping "to see his Pilot face to face." His brave heart never beat more true to the greatest music of human hopes than in his last year of human life. Sturdy, vigorous, skilful, he fought his long literary campaign, and now he falls as a man only to be more widely recognised as a poet. He challenged the "British Public" year after year for half-a-century and more, and confessed in one of his later works that as yet that "Public" did not love him. How much of the fault lay with the poet and how much with his readers is a nice point for critics to argue. His lines are rough, his thought abruptly crystalline, his allusions recondite. Readers who dare venture into the region of his poems must be sound in wind and limb. Mental dyspeptics are soon warned off. But for healthy spirits what a bracing atmosphere his verses breathe! True to the perceptions of his early years that a great soul lies in Nature and a mystery in the meanest man, he analysed one character after another as no writer has done in our language since SHAKESPEARE. Music, too, there is in his poems, but it is often Wagnerian; life even to the extreme characterises the swift movement of his thought. If such a writer has less influence on the average intelligence his power over picked minds abundantly compensates. BROWNING stimulates, refreshes, revivifies. A lover of life, he had life to give; and he has nobly helped the England that helped him.

It was a wisely decisive thing for the Dean of WESTMINSTER to welcome the illustrious dead to a place in Poets' Corner. The brief memorial of thanks, which was prepared by Mr. HALLAM TENNYSON and signed by some of our foremost leaders of thought and masters of language, is eloquent in its simplicity. Judges, philosophers, divines, artists, students, and poets attest at once their love of the great writer gone from their company, and their gratitude for the high and most fitting honour thus shown him. If it were possible to inter with his the remains of the singularly gifted lady who, by her marriage with ROBERT BROWNING, consummated the finest literary partnership on record, the Abbey would be distinctly enriched. Generations of quickened souls will turn devoutly thankful to his memorial, and it will serve to show that this century of ours, with all its tremblings, forebodings, and pessimism, brought forth one who never swerved from his faith in God, in Man, and in his art as a means of serving both. With less of mourning than with a chastened triumph, we may bear his remains to their rest. He fell as a ripe fruit from the tree; it showed ruddy and goodly in its summer, and its autumn has been kindly. Of such lives there are seeds that cannot die.

AN OLD-FASHIONED HOMILY.

CAN it be a year since last Christmas? "Yes," says Youth; "Impossible," says Age. Old or young, very few are sorry that Christmas is here once more, for is it not regarded as the jolliest and most festive season of the year? It is a time of reunion. Alas! not every family circle will be quite complete. Sadness will tinge many a home picture, and we shall shrink from filling the vacant chairs. Nevertheless sorrow shall become lighter. Sunshine, and joy, let us hope, will penetrate every hovering cloud, and let the humblest cot or garret be brightened by a ray of Christmas gladness.

Think, good people, of the good old customs of our forefathers, of the times when, as stories tell,

"Power laid his rule aside
And ceremony doff'd his pride."

Then, say the cheery chroniclers, there was hospitality for everyone; then cares lifted, hearts became buoyant, and households were full of merry laughter and joyous games. Carols were sung

in the churches instead of Psalms, and the congregations joined in heart and soul, while the jovial clerk closed the service by wishing them all "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year." Generosity and deep fellow-feeling abounded, gloom and desolation were chased away, the crackling yule log sent forth its shower of golden sparks, and many a poor outcast nestled in the warm bosom of kind-hearted charity. Has the world forgotten the way to laugh, and dance, and sing? Can nobody sweep the harp strings until they pour forth a torrent of melody? Are the holly and mistletoe, green this year as ever, emblems of a principle that is obsolete? Must we hunt for kindly feelings as we hunt for fossils? Let us repudiate the assumption that we are less generous and more phlegmatic than our fathers. On all hands the eye observes great preparations being made to characterise the season with wonted home festivity. While the shelves of your own cupboards groan under the weight of good things will you forget to be benevolent? The poor we have always with us. There are many sick and needy people in our midst, and we shudder at the joyless Christmas they will have unless some loving hand is held forth to them. God bless the true lady bountiful—modest, wise, and cheery. Though equality of wealth is out of the question, and the millennium, when universal fraternity and sympathetic good feeling shall be manifest, seems a great way off, practical philanthropy now sets its best foot forward in that direction. If our social state cannot be reconstructed its evils can, at all events, be ameliorated. It is granted that everyone has at this time of the year a license to laugh and romp, and be merry as he best can. Folk buy new books of riddles, conundrums, and games almost religiously. Let there be peace on earth, as far as we are concerned, and honest goodwill towards men. Let us be as babes in guile for the children's sake. Are not they anticipating all sorts of fun? They have been dreaming for weeks past, incited thereto by copious literature, of Christmas trees, grand wax candle illuminations, snapdragons, and plum pudding. Right glorious are these red-letter days for the children. When they grow old they do not forget them, and home remains the centre of many dear and sweet and tender associations, which act as a moral safeguard. Associations like these form so strong a tie that they draw many a man thousands of miles across the ocean away from his adopted country just to visit the scenes of his youth; perhaps, only to find out some new grave in the quiet churchyard. In foreign lands the emigrant watches eagerly for the Christmas post. His heart is sad indeed if he does not get some kind of greeting from the old friends over the seas. He pictures in his mind, perchance—no other picture being at hand—the old cottage by the wood, warm and cosy with its heavy thatch and blazing log fire, and he thinks of a certain old couple drawn up close around the hearth, grey with years, and bent with age.

At Christmas folk celebrate the birth of him in whom is centred the infinite hope of the race. It is natural that they should rejoice. If the principles which he taught were incorporated in human life and character to-day they would bridge over the great gulf existing between rich and poor, cultured and ignorant, and herald in the reign of acknowledged and glorious brotherhood. Let the hearts of those that love him be glad and generous. Ring the bells, pile up the logs, light the candles, and see that there is some ray of comfort in every household. Let the merry peals of young laughter awaken chords of mirth within your parent breasts; and, in the name of Heaven, stir up the dying embers of cheerfulness in those shrunken, care-worn, anxious hearts which time and want have sickened with deferred hope. It needs not to look far to find some poor old soul weighed down by sorrow, and oppressed with gloom; neglected, though surrounded by wealth; spurned and contemned, though a brother or sister; huddling in a cold, bare corner, with windows rag-patched, and with cupboard bare. Alas! there are too many ramshackle tenements in the world, with pain-racked, poverty-stricken outcasts for tenants. For the sake of all that's good and noble and Christian in human nature, put some sort of a smiling rainbow on these dark clouds, and drive away, if ever so transiently, the curmudgeons of care and the mean devils of want and discontent. If all men would recognise and fulfil their duties and obligations complaint and crying would cease. Many a Christmas till then, you say. Be it so. All the more fitting for us to hasten it.

The poor, like the rest of us, live very much in memories and anticipations. Let us do all we can to sweeten those memories and make cheerful those anticipations, and in the true spirit of the Master bid sorrow and sighing to flee away. Thus earnestly exhorting our readers not only to carol forth the angels' song of peace on earth, goodwill towards men, but also to engage in practical illustrations of the Gospel, we wish them all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

NOTES AND NEWS.

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PARLIAMENT is to meet on the 11th February.

THE *Birmingham Gazette* says Mr. Benson, the actor, is in no way related to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

MESSRS. SAMPSON LOW AND Co. are about to publish an autobiography of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe.

THE Biblical legend of Tobit has been dramatised, and produced at one of the minor theatres in Paris.

MR. SPURGEON's periodical, the *Sword and Trowel*, takes no note of Dr. Elmslie's death.

It is said that the *New Review* is about to pay increased attention to "theological controversy on broad lines."

THE *Echo* says Lord Tennyson refused £1,000 for twelve poems of eight lines each for Christmas cards for a London firm.

THE Peace Society boasts of having distributed about 400,000 copies of various forms of "peace" literature at the late Paris Exhibition. Much interest and inquiry were stimulated.

THE *Expositor* is about to begin a new series, in which it is said less space will be given to long series of articles, and more to single Papers complete in themselves.

A LONG resolution charging Professor Marcus Dods with heresy is to be moved by the Rev. M. White, of Blairgowrie, at the next meeting of the Meigle Free Presbytery.

THE Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts has received a donation of £9,000 in memory of the late Rev. John Turner, sometime curate at Whitby. His mother gave this amount at his desire.

THE memory of the Rev. A. H. Mackonochie is kept green by an annual requiem service, the second anniversary having been thus celebrated. Subscriptions did not come in sufficiently for the original design of building a memorial chapel.

ON Tuesday, at the half-yearly meeting of the Congregational Union, the "Forward" policy was coldly received. The Rev. Arthur Hall said Mr. Price Hughes' brass band had succeeded in emptying surrounding churches and chapels—including Mr. Hall's.

READERS of the *Inquirer* will notice that the office will be closed on Wednesday, and all communications should be in hand as early as possible on Tuesday. Attention to this suggestion will be regarded in the office as fair substitutes for "Christmas offerings."

NOVEMBER is not a thirsty month, yet Londoners consumed over 164 million gallons of water daily last month. The average of beer, wines, spirits, &c., is not to hand; but we are afraid Christmas week will be answerable for inordinate totals, as usual.

THE Burgomaster of Schopfheim, Baden, after bidding the preacher "moderate himself," left the church last Sunday accompanied by the whole congregation. It appears the pastor was giving some very plain speech concerning the sins of his parishioners.

THE week's obituary includes the names of Robert Browning, "Cuthbert Bede" (the Rev. Ed. Bradley), Thomas Purnell, artist and littérateur; Mrs. Beesly, Mr. W. G. Shrubsole (artist), Archbishop Ganglbauer, of Vienna; Dean Neville, of Cork; Mr. E. P. Bouverie, formerly M.P.

THE Evangelical Alliance has been startled by a zealous Welshman's addition to their suggestions of "subjects" for the Week of Prayer observed at this season. He proposes to pray the Lord to immediately disestablish and disendow the English Church, and his proposal got appended somehow to the official programme in the *Standard*.

THE Archbishop of Prague says the misery of centuries was caused by John Huss in promulgating the doctrine that the Church need not be obeyed. He forbids all Catholics to take part in meetings or subscriptions in honour of the reformer. His Grace does not appear to recognise that some centuries of misery have been caused by those who maintain that the Church *must* be obeyed.

MESSRS. SONNENSCHNEIN AND Co. have ready another edition of Rev. J. J. Wright's "Merry, Merry Boys," revised throughout. This book appears to be the favourite for prizes, although the same author's "Little Asker," and "Play With Your Own Marbles," are both in third editions.

MESSRS. MACMILLAN and Co. will publish in a few days the Archbishop of Canterbury's Second Charge, which will bear the title, "Christ and His Times"; Canon Westcott's edition of the "Greek Text of the Epistle to the Hebrews"; and the Bishop of Ripon's Bampton Lectures on "The Permanent Elements of Religion."

THE Rev. J. Hirst Hollowell, a Congregational minister well-known as a Liberal and an advocate of Board-school education, was presented with an illuminated address and £150 the other day, in recognition of his public services, as he is about to leave Nottingham for Rochdale.

THIS is how a Wesleyan periodical describes the Wesleyan lecture referred to in our last issue:—"The lecturer, like a royal eagle, spreads forth his ample pinions and mounts up with strong, steady, spiral sweep to the very gate of heaven. The rhythmic beat of his sentences is like the majestic pulsations of an eagle's or angel's wings."

THE American correspondent of the *Manchester Examiner* says that Dr. Talmage, during his stay at Athens, invited the few English and American residents and visitors in the city to assemble one Sunday afternoon on Mars' Hill, where, addressing them as "Ye men of Athens," he informed them that he perceived "that in all things they are too superstitious." A photographer had been ordered to be in attendance, and several excellent pictures were taken of the scene.

"It was Dr. Swift," says "S," the reviewer of Mr. Aitken's "Steele," in a recent issue of the *Inquirer*, "who played the waggish trick referred to in the article 'Winning or Losing.' The writer's reminiscence was hazy as to persons, for Steele adopted the pseudonym of Isaac Bickerstaff from Swift, and kept up his audacious prank with Partridge, the Almanack maker, in the *Tatler*." T. H. also corrects this mistake. Apologies to Steele and Swift herewith!

AN elderly lady in Kentucky entered into a written contract with her grandson that she would pay him five hundred dollars if he would stop smoking for a specified period. He agreed to do so, and nobly kept his part of the contract. She, however, died before the period expired. Her executors refused to pay over the money, and he brought a suit for its recovery. The lower courts deciding against him, he carried the case to the Court of Appeals of the State, and there obtained a judgment in his favour. The young man, having won his case, should at once make a contract with himself that he will never smoke again.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Church Times* clinches the editorial remarks on Mariolatry as follows:—

"The position seems to be this: Either that pure soul of the Blessed Virgin is in blissful ignorance of all invocation, but resting in eternal peace and glory. In this case adoration is vain; or, if she is aware of it, she must be grieved to be the successor of the Moon goddess (as one sees her depicted in some continental cathedrals), or as Flora in the *Mois de Marie*, or as Isis, in some of the rites used in her honour. Perhaps the adoration of the Ultramontanes grieves her more than the neglect of Protestants, or the foul language of her own people, the Jews. Thus, from reverence and love to our Blessed Lord's Mother, we should abstain from offering her the adoration of a heathen goddess."

"VOTE for" (a reverend gentleman)—"1, If you want to keep a School Board out of Stroud-green; 2, if you want to preserve the respectability of the neighbourhood; 3, if you want to keep down the rates; 4, if you don't want your property depreciated; 5, if you don't want the streets flooded with children from other parishes; 6, if you don't want your windows broken with tipcats and your knockers wrenched off; 7, if you don't want to pay 1s. in the pound more rates." Such was the appeal issued by a clerical candidate for election last week. Mr. Carvell Williams may well say, "Surely a gospel of selfishness was never so unblushingly preached by a minister of religion."

A FRATERNAL exchange of pulpits was effected last Sunday between the Rev. Charles Voysey, B.A., of the Theistic Church, Swallow-street, Piccadilly, and the Rev. C. J. Street, M.A., minister of the Free Christian Church, Croydon. We understand that both congregations expressed pleasure at the services of these ministers, and we know that the ministers felt equal pleasure in addressing the congregations, having no difficulty in finding a common ground of religious fellowship without touching upon matters of theological controversy. Mr. Voysey preached special sermons for the anniversary of the Croydon congregation, the collections being higher than usual. Mr. Street's morning sermon on "The Mystery of God" has been published as one of the series of "Theistic Sermons."

THE New York *Christian Advocate* tells a story of the faithful and tender ministrations of a Catholic priest, Father Schreiner, to an infirm Methodist minister, Dr. William Smith, of Detroit, Mich., who died at sea a few weeks ago. Father Schreiner took charge of his effects, by his request, had the body prepared for burial, and shipped it from New York to the deceased minister's family in Detroit, advancing the money from his own pocket for the expenses. On reporting at the Methodist Book Concern, Dr. Eaton, one of the agents, reimbursed him and thanked him in the name of all Methodist preachers. The good priest simply responded:—"I have done nothing more than a Christian duty, and what I would wish others to do for me under similar circumstances." It is little incidents like this that soften the asperities of ecclesiastical conflict, and help to remove the prejudice which makes it so hard for Catholics and Protestants to be just and fair and brotherly toward each other. Father Schreiner is a Benedictine, a professor in St. John's University, Collegeville, Minn.

OBITUARY.

MR. THOMAS FIELD GIBSON.

THE man whose name heads this article, and who passed away last week at the ripe age of eighty-six, at his London residence, was better known amongst us a quarter of a century ago or more than of late years, owing to his removal to Tunbridge Wells, which he only quitted some three months ago to reside again in the Metropolis. His removal was chiefly owing to the weakness of his throat and vocal organs, and there he found not only relief from his local malady, but renewed health and vigour. He was a link between the past and present generation. He succeeded his father as a silk manufacturer in Spitalfields, in the palmy days of the weaving trade, when the hand loom as yet felt but little the competition of the power loom, when the "hands" were numerous, well paid, scarcely educated at all, and as shiftless and thriftless in their habits as artisans usually are who are at once very ignorant and well paid. Mr. Gibson continued in business till he had realised a handsome fortune, not a penny of which was made by any grinding down of wages.

In 1851, when the first Great Exhibition was started, under the patronage of the late Prince Albert, Mr. Gibson was selected as one of the Royal Commissioners to help the Prince with their counsel and experience. Subsequently, and by request, he took part in the Great Exhibition held in Paris in 1867, if we remember rightly, as one of the English Commission, and in that capacity came much in contact with the Emperor Louis Napoleon.

But Mr. Gibson's active habits of business and genuine philanthropy of character disposed and fitted him in many ways to be helpful to the classes with whose needs his sympathies were warmly bound up. He early joined the London Domestic Mission, and acted for many years on its committee, and to the last continued to be one of its most liberal supporters. In the same spirit he became a warm supporter of the Wilkes-street Ragged-school, founded by Mr. Ebenezer Johnston, of the Hackney congregation, and carried on with great zeal by his daughter, Miss Caroline Johnston, after her father's decease, till its termination a few years ago. Till his removal to Tunbridge Wells Mr. Gibson acted as treasurer to the school. Again we find him engaged in promoting the Metropolitan Association for the Erection of Model Dwellings, and acting until his retirement as one of its unpaid directors, in connection with his intimate friends, the late Mr. Russell Scott and Mr. Edward Enfield. Three great blocks of model dwellings erected by the Association, now prospering, but for some years in low water, respectively bear the names of these steady, but wholly unostentatious philanthropists. After his removal to Tunbridge Wells he there made himself helpful to the benevolent institutions of the town, liberal, as usual, with his time, his ripe experience, and his purse.

Mr. Gibson was, however, more than a philanthropist. His character was as sterling as virgin gold. He had the culture, too, of an English gentleman, was a constant reader, and his fine library was sure to possess some of the latest and best books of modern literature. In his youth he enjoyed the great advantage of the Rev. Dr. Cogan's boarding-school at Walthamstow, where, amongst others of the scholars who rose in after life as professional or business men, Disraeli, afterwards Earl of Beaconsfield, was getting something of classical training, in which, by the way, he never particularly distinguished himself. In after years Mr. Gibson married one of Dr. Cogan's daughters—a second marriage—and all who have ever shared their gracious hospitality at Tunbridge Wells must have been struck by their entire congeniality of disposition and taste. Both Unitarians in conviction, they inclined rather to the Broad Church views of that body. During the short period of his recent residence in London, and so far as his and Mrs. Gibson's health would permit, they might be found at the Roslyn Hill Chapel, to which his only daughter and her family have been long attached. Indeed, one motive of his return to London was that he might be near Mrs. and Mr. Baily and his grandchildren, and enjoy more frequent intercourse with them. The cheerful, hopeful, genial nature of Mr. and Mrs. Gibson made intercourse with children peculiarly pleasant and acceptable to both. His conversation was, to use Lord Bacon's words, that of a "full man." A long life of intercourse with men like himself, and with books, grave and gay, an easy, fluent style of speech, wholly without egotism; a love of nature and art, with many specimens of which his fine dwelling-house and grounds at Tunbridge Wells were tastefully adorned, were very winning to those friends who from time to time shared his companionship, and ever saw in husband and wife the brighter and more benign side of our chequered human life, over which they cast unconsciously the mellow glow of their faith, hope, and love.

C. L. C.

[From another memoir, which arrived after the above was in type,

the following additional particulars are gleaned:—Mr. Thomas Gibson, the father of Mr. T. F. Gibson, was a resident at Canonbury, in the north of London, in 1803, when the latter was born. His strongly-marked character had much to do in forming that of his son, whose first school was Mr. Poticary's, of Blackheath, where Benjamin Disraeli is said to have been a pupil at the same time. Subsequently he attended the Rev. J. Tayler's school at Nottingham. He was first connected with Essex-street Chapel, and subsequently with South-place, in the erection of which his father took warm interest, and both father and son attended till the death of the Rev. W. J. Fox. The son was afterwards connected with New Gravel Pit Chapel, Hackney, during the pastorate of the Rev. R. Aspland. In 1833 Mr. T. F. Gibson married for the first time, his wife being a daughter of Dr. Pett, of Hackney. There was but one daughter of this marriage, and the wife died young. Subsequently, as stated above, he married Miss Cogan, who had also made the acquaintance of Benjamin Disraeli on his attending her father's school after leaving Mr. Poticary's. He took part with Mr. Cobden in the negotiations for the French Treaty of Commerce, but did not afterwards appear prominently in the political world. He will be long and deservedly remembered for the active share he took in the management of University College and Hospital.]

MR. JOHN WINGATE AIKIN, LYNN REGIS.

WE regret to announce the death, on the 8th inst., in his 85th year, of one of the oldest inhabitants of Lynn Regis. Mr. John Wingate Aikin died at his residence in High-street, where for the period of sixty years he had carried on the business of printer and stationer. He was the second son of Mr. G. Aikin, and grandson of Dr. John Aikin, author of "Evenings at Home" and other literary works. Mr. Aikin was born at Mepal on June 8, 1805, and was apprenticed for a time to Mr. Baldwin, a well known London printer, and while in London resided with his uncle, Mr. Arthur Aikin, at that time secretary to the Society of Arts, and lecturer on chemistry at Guy's Hospital, and also one of the founders of the Geological Society. Mr. J. Aikin was thus at the commencement of his life brought into association with science, and in after years retained a keen appreciation of his uncle's favourite studies. In 1829 Mr. Aikin came to reside in Lynn. He married a daughter of Mr. W. King, by whom he had two sons, both of whom he survived, one dying in early manhood. His married life was brief, his wife, to whom he was deeply attached, dying before her younger son. For many years Mr. Aikin took great interest in horticulture, and was one of the secretaries of the Lynn Horticultural Society. In politics he was a firm and consistent Liberal; in religion a Unitarian of the Dr. Martineau school. In business he was characterised by his scrupulous integrity. His manners were courteous, as became a gentleman of the past generation. For several years his bodily health had been declining, but being of a naturally cheerful and contented disposition, he bore his infirmities without complaint. He retained his mental faculties unimpaired, and up to the last took an interest in current events. The funeral took place in Lynn Cemetery, amidst universal indications of respect and esteem.

A correspondent adds:—"In the absence of Mr. James Hopgood (through illness) Mr. Aikin laid the foundation stone of the Free Christian (Unitarian) Church, and never ceased to take a deep interest in all connected with it. He was a man who commanded the respect of opponent and friend by his uprightness before God and downrightness before men."

MR. SMITH GOLLAND, MONTON.

THE Monton congregation have sustained a great loss in the death of Mr. Smith Golland, at the ripe age of seventy-nine. He was the son of Mr. Thomas Golland, a former member of the Cross-street congregation, Manchester. By his marriage with the daughter of the late Mr. George Leigh, and sister of Mr. Henry Leigh, J.P., he became connected with the family so long and well-known in connection with Monton. Among them he eventually settled, some twenty years ago, since which time he has been a constant and liberal supporter of the church and of its various institutions. For many years he acted as treasurer of the Manchester District Unitarian Association, and as an active member of the committee of the Unitarian Home Missionary Board. His membership of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association dates far back. Up to the time of his death he held the post and discharged the duties of treasurer to the Monton day school. He contributed freely to the cost of the new memorial schools, and continued to the last to take active interest in all that concerned the church and schools.

In politics he was an advanced and earnest Liberal, moving forward with the times, and ever ready to sympathise with and assist the

hopes and efforts of younger generations. His experience and judgment made him a most valuable leader in the district where he lived, and won for him the warm affection and esteem of great numbers of the working class electors, with whom he was alike popular and respected.

As a successful and honourable man of business he had made for himself a high reputation for sagacity and integrity. He was, till his death, the managing director of an important commercial company in Manchester. A strict performance of his duties was, perhaps, his leading characteristic, and only a week before his death he might have been seen in his place of business giving to his work there all the energy and attention which failing health would permit. Just a week, too, before his death he formed one of the enthusiastic audience who welcomed in the Free Trade Hall Mr. Gladstone, the leader whom he always delighted to honour. This probably was the immediate cause of the illness which brought to a close his long, useful and honourable life. He leaves neither widow nor children, but many relatives and friends, who will deeply feel his loss. On Monday last he was laid to his rest in the grounds of the church he had so faithfully served, and near the schools he loved so well.

At the funeral the Rev. John Moore, of Swinton, officiated, in the unavoidable absence of the Rev. P. M. Higginson. Besides Mr. John Barrow (brother-in-law), Mr. Henry S. Golland, and other nephews and personal relatives, there were present many members of the Monton congregation, and other friends; the Rev. C. T. Poynting, and Messrs. Frank Poynting, J. H. Brooks, G. H. Leigh, Percy Leigh, W. E. Nanson, J. Partington, John Dendy, jun.; Leo H. G. Crook, Harry Rawson, W. Shawcross, E. C. Harding, &c.

At the monthly meeting of the Unitarian Home Missionary Board Committee, held on Monday evening, the following resolution, moved by Mr. Harry Rawson, and seconded by Mr. J. H. Brooks, was passed:—"That the members of the Committee of the Unitarian Home Missionary Board desire to record their sense of the great loss sustained by the institution in the death of Mr. Smith Golland, recalling, as they do, his long connection with the Board, his faithful and earnest services as an officer and member of the committee, and his constant sympathy with its aims and work. The committee also desire to express their sincere sympathy with Miss Golland and the family in their bereavement."

MRS. ALFRED HIGGINSON.

We deeply regret to have to announce the death of this widely-esteemed lady, which occurred on Friday, the 13th inst., at her residence, 23, Roe-lane, Southport.

The youngest child of Mr. Thomas Martineau, of Norwich, she received the liberal education which he secured to all his children; an advantage which was cheerfully turned to account when the commercial crisis of the third decade of this century brought reverses to the family, and compelled the daughters to make provision by teaching or by authorship for their own expenses. Her experiences as a governess introduced her to several life-long friendships, which no time or separation chilled; nor did she ever regret the discipline, in exactitude of knowledge and finish of accomplishment which the sympathetic teacher gains from the pupil's needs. Her marriage to Mr. Alfred Higginson, surgeon, in 1841, settled her in Liverpool, where her mother at first shared their home, and her sister Rachel was already established, with her house full of pupils, and her brother was minister of Paradise-street Chapel, the predecessor of Hope-street Church.

The engagements of her married life were never allowed to suppress, but were rather compelled to develop and strengthen her previous enthusiasms both for good works and good art. Her experience gave her independent ideas of method in education, some of which she endeavoured to carry out in lessons given to the elder girls of the Harrington Schools, and afterwards published in a little book, entitled "The English Schoolgirl; her Position and Duties" (Chapman and Hall, 1859; republished, F. Norgate, 1879). And her musical culture, which gave a rare charm to her use of a lovely voice, rendered her an effective teacher of large classes for singing, gathered before her in the school galleries at Hope-street. At a later period she was for some time superintendent of the girls' department of the Mount Pleasant Sunday-school.

The few years' residence in London, after Mr. A. Higginson's retirement, in 1877, from his profession in Liverpool, were saddened by his decline in health, and death in 1884; and his widow, with her daughter, was naturally drawn back into Lancashire, and settled in the following year at Southport, within easy reach of her son, the Rev. P. M. Higginson, who had recently removed from Styal to Monton, near Manchester. Failing health, gradually defining itself into enfeebled action of the heart, reached its last moments peacefully on Friday, Dec. 13.

After a short service at the Southport house, conducted by the Rev. C. H. Wellbeloved, the interment took place on Wednesday last at the Ancient Chapel, Toxteth Park, Liverpool, in the grave where three infant children had been laid many years before.

During her residence at Tulse Hill, London, Mrs. Higginson attended, whenever possible, the services of the Rev. E. M. Geldart at Croydon, and felt the deepest interest in them; and by no one, beyond his own family, could his death be more deeply mourned. If her personal connection with the chapel at Southport has been less close, it is due to the restrictions imposed upon her by declining health. Her zeal for sacred truth, her attachment to her inherited religious connection, her unswerving fidelity to conscience in word and deed, have never changed. Yet her sympathies and admirations were narrowed by no limits of opinion or of class. Many an old servant, and work-woman, and dependent child, knows what a vigilant and kindly eye has found out the need which has never been told; and has provided the help. Quick to feel every call of duty and affection, she could never be charged with any slowness in the execution, unless it were from too scrupulous a care to do nothing less than the best, and too wise a judgment to be satisfied with the first and easiest course.

THE WONDROUS BABE.

ANYONE whose heart is tender and whose mind is wise will look on a young child's face with reverence and wonder. The great heroes, the sweet saints, the discoverers of knowledge, the holy martyrs for truth, the men and women who have made the world wiser and better by their earnest lives, all were once little helpless babes, with nothing to tell how grand their after life would be. And you, as you watch or tend anyone of the little children of to-day, cannot guess what may yet be the effect of its life on the world. Behind those sweet, sleepy eyes lies the brain that may some day teem with true and noble thoughts; the soul that may be a great inspiration to other souls, and that may help to bring God and his children nearer together. Those little rosy lips may yet speak such burning words of righteousness, and plead so powerfully with men's consciences that all will wonder at the gracious utterances that proceed out of that mouth, and will glorify God. Yes! we should reverence the children, for they are God's most wonderful work.

And Jesus, whose life has been of such priceless value to the world for over eighteen centuries, was a baby once; nursed on his mother's breast; his father's delight and joy. He was no different from the other babes in Nazareth in his weakness and his wants, his innocence and his grace. But when his short life was over in this world, and many hearts turned to him with great reverence and gratitude because of his ministry of love, it was said that when, as a babe, his parents took him to the Temple, a wise and holy man, looking into his lovely face, seemed to get a vision of what such a child might come to be, and blessed God for him!

If fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, would only learn this lesson, and bless God for the little ones, guarding them from every evil word and sinful example in the certainty that God will make use of them, by-and-by, to do His work in the world! If only we could learn such a reverence for the spotless purity of childhood as never to sully it by the sight of evil tempers and selfish ways, never to pervert it by lessons of deceit and craftiness, how many more beautiful lives there would be! If one of the princes or princesses of our land were to come into our midst, how careful we should be of our behaviour and speech lest in any way we should offend. But when God sends one of His royal children into a family how careless all are of word and conduct. It is grievous to see what bad lessons are taught even to little children in arms; how revengefulness and selfishness are aroused in their little breasts, half in fun, perhaps, but no less harmfully. "Did the naughty chair hurt you! Beat it then!" I have heard said when a child fell and hurt itself. "Did pussy scratch! Whip it!" when poor pussy, tormented beyond endurance, tried to protect itself. What but cruelty and revenge could come of such teaching? I met a girl and a little child one day. "Make haste and eat it all up, and mind you don't tell Johnny you've had any!" was the lesson in greediness and cunning that little heart was being taught.

Do you think that little child in Nazareth was taught that way by his mother Mary? Do you think Joseph the Carpenter set the example to his first-born that so many a father does nowadays? Do you think that when Jesus had younger brothers and sisters he made them selfish, deceitful, greedy, or cruel by his way of playing with them? We know nothing of those early years of his life, but we feel sure they must have been guarded and watched over by a good father and mother, and kept from evil, so that the sweet innocence of childhood was not marred by wicked teachings. For it is wicked to rouse evil passions in a child's breast.

Jesus lived not to be different from other men, but that men should be like him; but the man was once the child, and the beginnings shape the endings. If, then, we wish to see the world better let us bless God for the children, and see the salvation He prepares before the face of all the peoples by sending them in their innocence and purity. For their sakes let us sanctify ourselves, taking heed lest we put stumbling-blocks in the way of any of them by word or deed of ours. Do not spoil God's beautiful work. Let the children grow, like Jesus, in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

H. W. H.

CHURCHES AND SOCIETIES.

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{Secretaries and others are particularly requested to send their reports—which should be as brief as convenient—not later than Tuesday, otherwise such matter must be condensed or postponed.}

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SHORT REPORTS.

ACCRINGTON.—On Saturday last a sale of work was held in the schoolroom in connection with the Free Christian Church, to raise funds towards clearing off a debt of over £400 remaining on the new school, class rooms, and chapel buildings. The congregation are burdened with £18 per annum for interest on the above amount, and are making an effort to clear off the whole amount if possible by the coming spring. The sale of work was formally opened by Councillor John Taylor, of Accrington, Messrs. M. Haworth, A. E. Ball, secretary to the congregation, and T. Waddington, treasurer, being also present. The sale of work was continued on the following Monday evening, the 16th, when Mr. Orlando Robinson, of Padiham, gave a short ventriloquial entertainment. The sum of £60 12s. 1d. was realised, and the committee return their sincere thanks to all who have contributed to this success.

AUSTRALIA: SYDNEY.—The *Town and County Journal* of October 12 gives a lengthy and eulogistic notice of the career of the Rev. F. Walters, the minister of our church at Sydney. He has been there about fifteen months, and the notice referred to says he has had the satisfaction of seeing his congregation considerably increased, while the evening attendance is almost invariably a crowded one. We regret that pressure on our space prevents a more extended quotation.

BANBRIDGE.—The Rev. C. H. Osler preached a memorial sermon last Sunday in connection with the death of Mr. William Walker, J.P., who died on the 13th inst., after a long life of useful influence in the neighbourhood. At the funeral on Monday there was a very large attendance of ministers, justices of the peace, and other friends, local and from a distance, the spacious meeting-house being unable to accommodate all the visitors. As an employer and a staunch supporter of the church he will be long remembered with respect.

BELFAST.—The Rev. R. S. Clarke, of Moira, has succeeded the Rev. J. C. Street as one of the secretaries of the Unitarian Society.

BIRKENHEAD.—A sale of fancy work was held on Monday, in aid of funds for a new schoolroom. Mr. J. Samuelson performed the opening ceremony. The stalls were presided over by Mrs. Strouge, Mrs. H. Willmer, the Misses L. and J. Willmer, Mrs. Samuelson, Miss L. Milne, Miss Dalby, Miss Pinkerton, and others. The Rev. J. E. Stronge stated that he had received several letters of apology from gentlemen of the congregation, and amongst them was one from Mr. Dalby, who also enclosed a note for £25 towards the building of the new room, on the understanding that operations were started within a reasonable period. Mr. Samuelson said it was estimated that a cost of £300 would be incurred. In addition to the £25 from Mr. Dalby there were several gentlemen of the congregation who had, between them, promised a further sum of £85, under similar conditions to those of Mr. Dalby. The sale was very successful, and the room is eagerly looked for by the various classes and societies connected with the church.

BIRMINGHAM: CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH.—We regret to learn that a member of the young men's class, who has been suffering from sleeplessness and chronic depression, attempted to shoot himself on Sunday morning, in the presence of the class. The young man, Walter Johnson, has been very highly esteemed by his friends, and acted as secretary to the class. Happily, no serious harm was done, as the bullet inflicted a mere scratch, and it is hoped that his return to mental and physical health will be speedy and permanent.

BIRMINGHAM: MEETING OF PROTESTANT DISSENTING MINISTERS OF WARWICKSHIRE AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTIES (ESTABLISHED 1782).—The monthly meeting of this body was held at the Church of the Messiah, Birmingham, on the 11th inst., Rev. Dr. Crosskey presiding. There were also present Rev. H. McKean (secretary), Oldbury; Rev. H. Eachus (treasurer), Coseley; Revs. Joseph Wood, C. Clarke, W. J. Clarke, Read, Tranter, Prime, George St. Clair, Mellor (Birmingham); Crossley (Cradley), Howard (Tamworth), Lake (Warwick), Smith (Wolverhampton), Hall (Kidderminster), and Harrison (West Bromwich). After the routine business Dr. Crosskey introduced the subject of the abolition of school fees and the case of the Salisbury School Board. The following resolutions were unanimously passed:—1. "That this meeting of Protestant Dissenting Ministers of Warwickshire and Neighbouring Counties earnestly urges the friends of national education to take steps to secure an alteration of the law under which it is possible for the managers of Denominational Schools to be permitted to supply a deficiency of school accommodation even in districts in which a School Board exists; and protests against the action of the Department at Salisbury in unwarrantably delaying the issue of a requisition for the establishment of a Board School in order to prevent the erection of such a school, and to compel all the children of that city to attend schools of a sectarian character and under sectarian management, contrary to the expressed desire of a large number of the inhabitants." 2. "That this meeting having regard to the probability of the introduction of some measure of Free Education during the next session of Parliament—as indicated by the speech of the Prime Minister at Nottingham, on November 26—desires to express its conviction that in the interests of education, as well as of the principles of civil and religious liberty, strenuous opposition should be offered to any proposal that fees shall be paid by the State in schools which are not under the direct management of local representative authorities." The Rev. R. T. Nicholson read a Paper on "Ministerial Tact," which led to an animated discussion.

BRADFORD.—CHAPEL LANE UNITARIAN CHAPEL: SALE OF WORK.—A sale of work in aid of the proposed extension of the school premises connected with the Chapel-lane Unitarian Chapel, Bradford, was opened in the schoolroom on Friday, the 6th inst., by Mrs. W. P. Byles. Fully double the present available space is desirable; and it is to secure this end that the congregation are working. By means of a bazaar held in the Technical College last year, and in other ways, a substantial nucleus towards the sum required has been raised, and to swell this amount the sale of work was promoted. The sale was continued on Saturday, and the proceeds amounted to nearly £70. (The report of this meeting arrived too late for insertion last week.)

CHELMSFORD.—The Rev. E. T. Russell preached at the Popular Service held in the Co-Operative Assembly Room on Sunday afternoon. There was a good attendance. Mr. Russell also conducted the service at the chapel in the evening. The Band of Hope was reopened on the 11th inst., when Mr. G. Chalcraft invited the members to tea.

CHELTONHAM.—The Ladies' Sewing Society's sale of work, which is held annually in connection with the Bayshill Unitarian Church, took place in the schoolroom, on the 11th inst. The sale was opened by the Rev. John Robberds, B.A. The stalls, which were well stocked with an interesting collection of plain and fancy articles, were presided over by Mrs. Turland, Mrs. Bailey, Mrs. Bastin, Miss Hatte, Mrs. Mills, Mrs. Child, and Mrs. Flowers. The sale was well patronised during the day, and was successfully continued on the following day.

LEIGH.—On Tuesday evening the sixth of a series of lectures concerning the Unitarian cause was given in the King-street Chambers, Leigh, by Mr. J. McGavin Sloan, of Padiham, the subject being "Thoughts of a Unitarian concerning the Bible." There was a good attendance.

LONDON: DEPTFORD.—On Monday night, December 16, a Christmas concert was given in the church, a large and very appreciative audience of the congregation and friends being present. Mrs. Edwards, Mrs. Timmins, Miss Houston, Miss Thomas, and Messrs. W. Tate and G. Callow contributed music. Mr. David Martineau took the chair, and Mr. Hahnemann Epps and Mr. Tate gave excellent addresses. The music class, under Mrs. Timmins' direction, sang five anthems.

LONDON: COLLEGE CHAPEL, STEPNEY-GREEN, E.—The Rev. T. B. Evans, M.A., 4, Copley-road, S. Hackney, will be glad to receive any donations towards defraying the expenses of the Sunday school parties during the coming holidays. During the present winter seven institutions have been started in the church, and all of them are making satisfactory progress. Towards these societies, the Guild, composed mainly of the school teachers, has voted largely from its funds for the Christmas parties. An appeal is therefore confidently made to friends for help. Parcels of clothing, &c., sent to the above address will be gladly distributed by the lady teachers among those whom they know to be in great need.

MANCHESTER: OLDHAM-ROAD.—A social gathering of the members of the Boys' and Girls' Clubs, which have recently been started in connection with the Sunday-school, took place on Friday, Dec. 13. About fifty members were present, and recitations, &c., were given. During the interval refreshments were provided by the members of the Cookery Class, which is held in connection with the Girls' Club. It may be mentioned that these clubs are managed by Guild members, who take it in turns to superintend.

MANCHESTER: MINISTRY TO THE POOR.—On Dec. 17 a concert was given to the members of the Boys' Club by Miss Allot, Miss Fielding, Miss Walker, and Messrs. H. and A. Walker. Mr. Egbert Steintal presided.

MANSFIELD.—Speaking last Tuesday at a "footing supper," given by the master and men of Walton's Boot Factory, the Rev. Edgar I. Fripp, B.A., after expressing his pleasure at the cordial relationship between employer and employee in that firm, said, "The air was full of strikes, of which some explanation must be given by those who undertook to guide the thought and action of the day. As a Christian minister he ventured to think that a strike was a good thing as expressing the growing well-founded conviction among workers that some great wrong lay somewhere at the root of social ills. But it could never do more than a very temporary good to one particular interest, and at a very great cost. A strike could do nothing permanent so long as hungry men tramped the country glad of a berth at any price. It was merely a blow in the dark, and struck the nearest person which happened to be labour's greatest friend. There was no real conflict between labour and capital. The interests of both were necessarily one, in so far as capital, properly defined, was only the product of labour. And for this reason both capital and labour were at the mercy of a third and entirely different interest. They were in the hands of the privileged 'owners' of that without which both must necessarily be idle—namely, the land. Economic rent was the great and ever-growing burden which labour and capital had equally to bear. Let them, therefore, join hands to tax this economic rent, and convert it into channels of public usefulness—a tax which, as it was increased, would compel the 'owners' of land the more keenly to compete for tenants, and throw open to the unemployed the God-given opportunities of life and wealth in mine and field and city site. All round Mansfield valuable lands were the idle pleasure-grounds of dukes, yielding rabbits and pheasants instead of hardy men; and in the town itself numbers of petty and vexatious rates were imposed to pay expenses which ought to be borne by taxation of the value that attached to the land by the mere presence of the people themselves." These remarks were received with applause.

MILNROW.—Services continue to be held in the Liberal Club every Sunday afternoon, and are on the whole well attended. Mr. Spedding has been able to obtain the assistance of a few of the local ministers and laymen, and their ministrations have been highly appreciated. The committee has also resolved itself into the "Milnrow Unitarian Mission Society," and hopes before long to be possessed of a permanent home. Considerable excitement was produced during last week by a lecture on the "Atonement," by the Rev. A. J. Harrison, the well-known lecturer on Christian Evidences. The meeting was held in the Church schools, and partook of the nature of a demonstration, nearly all the Orthodox bodies being represented, and the Congregational minister occupying a seat on the platform. One of the local papers says:—"Members of all denominations were in the audience, and Unitarianism, after the able exposition of the rev. lecturer, must have received a severe blow, so far as the Milnrow district is concerned." Be this as it may, there was a large and interested audience at the Liberal Club on Sunday, when the Rev. T. P. Spedding lectured upon "Why I am not a Trinitarian." Mr. Spedding's remarks on the lecture at the Church school were cheered. It is much to be regretted that a course of lectures promised by the North-East Lancashire Association should have been postponed until the "autumn of 1890," as just now they would have been of great service.

MOSSLEY.—On Saturday last the annual sale of work was opened by Mr.

present minister the Sunday-school has not only largely increased in numbers and average attendance, but owing to a system of "teachers' preparation classes," inaugurated and conducted by him, the instruction given has become much more systematic and thorough.

TENTERDEN.—The first session of the Ashford-road Mutual Improvement Society was brought to a close on Tuesday, the 10th inst., when the Rev. E. G. Cammidge, of Maidstone, delivered a highly interesting lecture on "Charles Dickens." The Society was formed in October, and has supplied a long felt want in the town. Other lectures have been given by the Rev. J. Taylor, of Horsham, on "Eliza Cook"; the Rev. W. E. Mellone, of Bessel's Green, on "Wordsworth"; the Rev. G. W. Lewin on "American Humour and Humorists"; and J. E. Mace, Esq., on "Old Tenterden." Other Papers have been given by members, and good music has been provided for each meeting. Drawing and shorthand classes have also been formed amongst the young people of the congregation.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.

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OUR CALENDAR.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22.

It is requested that notices of any alteration in the Calendar be sent to the Publisher not later than Thursday Afternoon.

LONDON.

Bedford Chapel, Bloomsbury, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. STOPFORD BROOKE.
 Bermondsey, Fort-road, Upper Grange-road, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. G. CARTER.
 Brixton, Unitarian Christian Church, Effra-road, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. W. M. AINSWORTH.
 Croydon, Free Christian Church, Wellesley-road, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. C. J. STREET, M.A.
 Essex Church, The Mall, Notting-hill-gate, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. W. CAREY WALTERS. Morning: "In Memoriam, Robert Browning. Evening: "How the Doctrine of the Trinity Grew."
 Hackney, New Gravel Pit Church, Chatham-pl., Paragon road, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. J. T. WHITEHEAD.
 Islington, Unity Church, Upper-street, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. J. B. LLOYD.
 Kentish Town, Free Christian Church, Clarence-road, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. CLEMENT PIKE.
 Little Portland-street Chapel, near Oxford-circus, 11.15 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. P. H. WICKSTEED, M.A.
 Mansford-street Church and Mission, Bethnal Green, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. H. GOW, B.A.
 Peckham, Avondale-road, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Dr. MUMMERY.
 Richmond, Unitarian Christian Church, Channing Hall, Friar's-lane, 11.30 and 7, Rev. SILAS FARRINGTON.
 Stamford-street, Blackfriars-road, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. W. COPELAND BOWIE.
 Stoke Newington, The Green, 11.15 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. W. WOODING, B.A.
 Wandsworth, Unitarian Christian Church, East-hill, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. W. G. TARRANT, B.A.
 Wood Green Assembly Rooms, 7 P.M., Rev. T. W. FRECKELTON.

PROVINCIAL.

BATH, Trim-street Chapel, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. F. W. STANLEY.
 BOURNEMOUTH, Conservative Club Assembly Room, St. Michael's Rise, 11 A.M., Rev. G. H. VANCE, B.D.
 BRIGHTON, Christ Church Free Christian, New-road, North-st., 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. ALF. HOOD.
 BUXTON, Hartington-road Church, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. R. COWLEY SMITH.
 CHATHAM, Unitarian Christian Church, Hamond-hill, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. F. ALLEN.
 CHELTENHAM, Bayshill Church, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. EPHRAIM TURLAND.
 LIVERPOOL, Hope-street Church, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. R. A. ARMSTRONG, B.A.
 MANCHESTER, Platt Chapel, Rusholme, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. CHAS. T. POYNTING, B.A.

SCARBOROUGH, Westborough, 10.45 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. S. FLETCHER WILLIAMS.
 SOUTHPORT, Portland-street Church, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. CHAS. H. WELBELOVED.
 TORQUAY, Free Christian Church, Bannercross Hall, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. FRANK SHAW.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

ESSEX CHURCH, 11 A.M., Anthem, "Rejoice Greatly" (Messiah), Mme. Carrie Blackwell, "Glory to God" (Messiah), "Nazareth" (Gounod).
 ISLINGTON, Unity Church, Upper-street, 11 A.M., Rev. J. B. LLOYD.
 LITTLE PORTLAND-STREET, Oxford-circus, 11.15 A.M., Rev. P. H. WICKSTEED, M.A.
 WANDSWORTH, 11 A.M., Rev. W. G. TARRANT, B.A.
 BRIGHTON, 11 A.M. Collection on behalf of Sunday School Funds.
 CHATHAM, Hamond-hill, 11 A.M., Rev. F. ALLEN.
 LIVERPOOL, Hope-street, 11 A.M., Musical Service.
 MANCHESTER, Platt Chapel, 11 A.M., Rev. CHAS. T. POYNTING.
 SCARBOROUGH, Westborough, 10.45 A.M., Rev. S. FLETCHER WILLIAMS.
 WHITCHURCH, Salop, 10.30 A.M., with Sermon and Old "Nativity Festival" Carols.

NOTICE.

** Calendar Advertisements inserted as above, 10s. a year, prepaid. Additional matter 4 l. per line. Single Advertisements 6d. per line.

BIRTH.

SCOTT—On the 18th inst., at Denton, Manchester, the wife of the Rev. Lawrence Scott, of a son.

DEATHS.

GIBSON—On the 12th December, at his residence, 60, Fitzjohn's-avenue, Hampstead, Thomas Field Gibson, aged 86.
 HIGGINSON—On December 13th, at 23, Roe-lane, Southport, aged 78, years, Ellen, widow of Alfred Higginson, M.R.C.S., formerly of Liverpool.
 SMALLFIELD—On the 13th inst., at the North Eastern Hospital for Children (Nurse), Nina Blake, youngest daughter of the late Alfred Smallfield, aged 25.

ETHICAL SOCIETY, Essex Hall, Strand, Dec. 22, 7.30 P.M., Mr. W. LANT CARPENTER, B.A., on "Evening Continuation Schools: their need, their method, and their result."

HIGHGATE UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN CHURCH BUILDING FUND.

The estimated cost, including ground and school building, is £5,000.

	£	s.	d.
Amount previously advertised	3819	2	0
FURTHER SUBSCRIPTIONS.			
Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Lake	20	0	0
Mrs. Evans	2	2	0
Miss L. H. Powell	1	1	0
Miss Stainbank	1	0	0
Miss E. A. Corfield	1	1	0
Miss Freeman	2	0	0
Mrs. E. Nettlefold (Organ Fund) ...	5	0	0
Mrs. G. H. Meisner	1	1	0
Miss M. A. Davies	0	13	0
Mr. C. C. Grundy	1	0	0
Mr. Hall	1	0	0
Mrs. Clara Walbey	1	0	0
Mr. Henry Tate (Organ Fund) ...	100	0	0
Miss Squier	0	13	0
A few Friends at Horsham	3	15	6

Subscribers are respectfully reminded that the Building is now in course of erection, and the Treasurer would be glad to receive promised donations, or instalments of the same, at the earliest convenience of the Subscribers. Address, FREDERICK WITALL, Esq., Red Gables, Crouch End, London, N.

UNITY CHURCH, UPPER-STREET, ISLINGTON.

On CHRISTMAS DAY, Morning at Eleven, there will be a Christmas Service of Praise and Prayer, with brief Address by the Rev. J. B. LLOYD. All seats free.

BRITISH & FOREIGN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

The NEXT MEETING of the COUNCIL will be held in the Council Room, Essex Hall, Strand, London, on WEDNESDAY, January 22nd, 1890. The Chair will be taken by the President, T. CHATFIELD CLARKE, Esq., at Half past Two o'clock.

HENRY IERSON, Secretary.

LONDON DISTRICT UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

Special and Urgent Appeal from the President to raise £1,000 to enable the Society to carry on its work.

	Donations.	Incd. Subs.	£	s.	d.
Amount already advertised	332	2	0	14	15
Sir Wm. Lawrence	25	0	0	—	—
Miss Preston	20	0	0	—	—
G. G. Pearson	5	0	0	—	—
Mrs. Garrett	5	5	0	2	2
S. Charlesworth	5	0	0	—	—
W. Wilson	—	—	—	1	1
J. Toye	0	5	0	—	—
E. Bromley	1	1	0	—	—
W. Thornely	10	0	0	—	—
E. Clephan	10	0	0	—	—
W. H. Vertue	5	5	0	—	—
J. S. Beale	10	0	0	—	—
Mrs. Bruce	25	0	0	—	—

Replics are requested to be addressed to the Treasurer, D. MARTINEAU, 6, Christian-street, E.; or to STANTON WM. PRESTON, 7, Eldon-road, Hampstead, N.W., Hon. Sec.

BLACKLEY UNITARIAN CHAPEL, BLACKLEY, NEAR MANCHESTER.

AN APPEAL.

This congregation, which is composed principally of the working class, being still burdened with a debt on the New Chapel, and having to raise a further sum to cover cost of replacing floor, repairing pews, &c., in consequence of dry rot, urgently appeal to friends of the cause for financial assistance towards clearing off the £450 that is required. Towards this amount the members of the congregation have, during the last few weeks, responded to a personal appeal in a very liberal manner, having subscribed amongst themselves £150, but it is now necessary to ask for outside aid, and they are hopeful that help will be forthcoming from generous Unitarian friends throughout the country which will enable them to entirely free the Chapel from debt.

Donations will be thankfully received by

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